

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

VINCENTIO, the Duke.
ANGELO, Lord Deputy in the Duke's absence.
ESCALUS, an Ancient Lord, joined with Angelo in the deputation.
CLAUDIO, a young Gentleman.
LUCIO, a Fantastic.
Two other like Gentlemen.
VARRIUS, a Gentleman attending on the Duke.
PROVOST.
THOMAS, } two Friars.
PETER, }
A Justice.

ELBOW, a simple Constable.
FROTH, a foolish Gentleman.
POMPEY, Tapster to Mistress Overdone.
ABHORSON, an Executioner.
BARNARDINE, a dissolute Prisoner.
ISABELLA, sister to Claudio.
MARIANA, betrothed to Angelo.
JULIET, beloved of Claudio.
FRANCISCA, a Nun.
MISTRESS OVERDONE, a Bawd.
Lords, Officers, Citizens, Boy, and Attendants.

SCENE.—Vienna.

ACT I

SCENE I.—An Apartment in the DUKE'S Palace.

Enter DUKE, ESCALUS, Lords, and Attendants.

Duke. Escalus.

Escal. My lord?

Duke. Of government the properties to unfold,

Would seem in me to affect speech and discourse, Since I am put to know that your own science

Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice

My strength can give you: then no more remains, But that, to your sufficiency, as your worth is able,

And let them work. The nature of our people, Our city's institutions, and the terms

For common justice, you're as pregnant in, As art and practice hath enriched any

That we remember. There is our commission,

From which we would not have you warp. Call hither,

I say, bid come before us Angelo.

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, drest him with our love,

And given his deputation all the organs

Of our own power: what think you of it?

Escal. If any in Vienna be of worth

To undergo such ample grace and honour,

It is Lord Angelo.

Duke. Look where he comes.

Enter ANGELO.

Ang. Always obedient to your Grace's will,

I come to know your pleasure.

Duke. Angelo,

There is a kind of character in thy life,

That, to th' observer doth thy history

Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues

Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike

As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely

touch'd

But to fine issues, nor Nature never lends

The smallest scruple of her excellence,

But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines

Herself the glory of a creditor,

Both thanks and use. But I do bend my speech

To one that can my part in him advertise;

Hold, therefore, Angelo:

[Tendering his commission.]

In our remove be thou at full yourself;

Mortality and mercy in Vienna

Live in thy tongue and heart. Old Escalus,

Though first in question, is thy secondary.

Take thy commission. [Giving it.]

Ang. Now, good my lord,

Let there be some more test made of my metal,

Before so noble and so great a figure

Be stamp'd upon it.

Duke. No more evasion:

We have with a heaven'd and prepared choice

Proceeded to you; therefore take your honours.

Our haste from hence is of so quick condition

That it prefers itself, and leaves unquestion'd

Matters of needful value. We shall write to you,

As time and our concerns shall importune,

How it goes with us; and do look to know

What doth befall you here. So, fare you well:

To the hopeful execution do I leave you

Of your commissions.

Ang. Yet, give leave, my lord,

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,

So to enforce or qualify the laws

As to your soul seems good. Give me your hand;

I'll privily away: I love the people,

But do not like to stage me to their eyes.

Though it do well, I do not relish well

Their loud applause and Aves vehement,

Nor do I think the man of safe discretion

That does affect it. Once more, fare you well.

ACT I, SCENE I]

Ang. The heavens give safety to your purposes!

Escal. Lead forth and bring you back in happiness!

Duke. I thank you. Fare you well. [Exit.]

Escal. I shall desire you, sir, to give me leave

To have free speech with you; and it concerns me

To look into the bottom of my place:

A power I have, but of what strength and nature

I am not yet instructed.

Ang. 'Tis so with me. Let us withdraw together,

And we may soon our satisfaction have

Touching that point.

Escal. I'll wait upon your honour.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—A Street.

Enter LUCIO and two Gentlemen.

Lucio. If the Duke with the other dukes come

not to composition with the King of Hungary,

why then, all the dukes fall upon the king.

First Gent. Heaven grant us its peace, but

not the King of Hungary's!

Second Gent. Amen.

Lucio. Thou concludest like the sanctimonious

pirate, that went to sea with the Ten Com-

mandments, but scraped one out of the table.

Second Gent. 'Thou shalt not steal?'

Lucio. Ay, that he razed.

First Gent. Why, 'twas a commandment to

command the captain and all the rest from their

functions: they put forth to steal. There's not

a soldier of us all, that, in the thanksgiving

before meat, doth relish the petition well that

prays for peace.

Second Gent. I never heard any soldier dis-

like it.

Lucio. I believe thee, for I think thou never

wast where grace was said.

Second Gent. No? a dozen times at least.

First Gent. What, in metre?

Lucio. In any proportion or in any language.

First Gent. I think, or in any religion.

Lucio. Ay; why not? Grace is grace, despite

of all controversy: as, for example, thou thyself

art a wicked villain, despite of all grace.

First Gent. Well, there went but a pair of

shears between us.

Lucio. I grant; as there may between the

lists and the velvet: thou art the list.

First Gent. And thou the velvet: thou art

good velvet; thou art a three-piled piece, I war-

rant thee. I had as lief be a list of an English

kersey as be piled, as thou art piled, for a French

velvet. Do I speak feelingly now?

Lucio. I think thou dost; and, indeed, with

most painful feeling of thy speech: I will, out

of thine own confession, learn to begin thy

health; but, whilst I live, forget to drink after

thee.

First Gent. I think I have done myself wrong,

have I not?

Second Gent. Yes, that thou hast, whether

thou art tainted or free.

Lucio. Behold, behold, where Madam Miti-

73

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

gation comes! I have purchased as many diseases

under her roof as come to—

Second Gent. To what, I pray?

Lucio. Judge.

Second Gent. To three thousand dolours a

year.

First Gent. Ay, and more.

Lucio. A French crown more.

First Gent. Thou art always figuring diseases

in me; but thou art full of error: I am sound.

Lucio. Nay, not as one would say, healthy;

but so sound as things that are hollow: thy

bones are hollow; impiety has made a feast of

thee.

Enter MISTRESS OVERDONE.

First Gent. How now! which of your hips

has the most profound sciatica?

Mrs. Ov. Well, well; there's one yonder ar-

rested and carried to prison was worth five

thousand of you all.

Second Gent. Who's that, I pray thee?

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

Claudio.

First Gent. Claudio to prison! 'tis not so.

Mrs. Ov. 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?

Mrs. Ov. I am too sure of it; and it is for

getting Madam Julietta with child.

Lucio. Believe me, this may be: he promised

to meet me two hours since, and he was ever

precise in promise-keeping.

Second Gent. Besides, you know, it draws

something near to the speech we had to such

a purpose.

First Gent. But most of all, agreeing with

the proclamation.

Lucio. Away! let's go learn the truth of it.

[Exeunt LUCIO and Gentlemen.]

Mrs. Ov. Thus, what with the war, what with

the sweat, what with the gallows and what with

poverty, I am custom-shrunk.

Enter POMPEY.

How now! what's the news with you?

Pom. Yonder man is carried to prison.

Mrs. Ov. Well: what has he done?

Pom. A woman.

Mrs. Ov. But what's his offence?

Pom. Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.

Mrs. Ov. What, is there a maid with child by

him?

Pom. No; but there's a woman with maid

by him. You have not heard of the proclama-

tion, have you?

Mrs. Ov. What proclamation, man?

Pom. All houses of resort in the suburbs

of Vienna must be plucked down.

Mrs. Ov. And what shall become of those in

the city?

Pom. They shall stand for seed: they had

gone down too, but that a wise burgher put in

for them.

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

Pom. To the ground, mistress.

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

Pom. 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.

Mrs. Ov. What's to do here, Thomas tapster? Let's withdraw.

Pom. Here comes Signior Claudio, led by the provost to prison; and there's Madam Juliet.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter PROVOST, CLAUDIO, JULIET, and Officers.

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

Bear me to prison, where I am committed.

Prov. I do it not in evil disposition, But from Lord Angelo by special charge.

Claud. Thus can the demi-god Authority Make us pay down for our offence by weight. The words of heaven; on whom it will, it will; On whom it will not, so: yet still 'tis just.

Re-enter LUCIO and two Gentlemen.

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

Claud. From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty:

As surfeit is the father of much fast, So every scope by the immoderate use Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue— Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,— A thirsty evil, and when we drink we die.

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

Claud. What but to speak of would offend again.

Lucio. What, is't murder?

Claud. No.

Lucio. Lechery?

Claud. Call it so.

Prov. Away, sir! you must go.

Claud. One word, good friend. Lucio, a word with you.

Lucio. A hundred, if they'll do you any good. Is lechery so looked after?

Claud. Thus stands it with me: upon a true contract

I got possession of Julietta's bed: You know the lady; she is fast my wife, Save that we do the denunciation lack Of outward order: this we came not to, Only for propagation of a dower Remaining in the coffer of her friends, From whom we thought it meet to hide our love Till time had made them for us. But it chanceth The stealth of our most mutual entertainment With character too gross is writ on Juliet.

Lucio. With child, perhaps?

Claud. Unhappily, even so.

And the new deputy now for the duke,— Whether it be the fault and glimpse of newness,

Or whether that the body public be A horse whereon the governor doth ride, Who, newly in the seat, that it may know He can command, lets it straight feel the spur; Whether the tyranny be in his place, Or in his eminence that fills it up,

I stagger in:—but this new governor Awakes me all the enrolled penalties Which have, like unscour'd armour, hung by the wall

So long that nineteen zodiacs have gone round, And none of them been worn; and, for a name, Now puts the drowsy and neglected act Freshly on me: 'tis surely for a name.

Lucio. I warrant it is: and thy head stands so tickle on thy shoulders that a milkmaid, if she be in love, may sigh it off. Send after the duke and appeal to him.

Claud. I have done so, but he's not to be found.

I prithee, Lucio, do me this kind service. This day my sister should the cloister enter, And there receive her approbation:

Acquaint her with the danger of my state; Implore her, in my voice, that she make friends To the strict deputy; bid herself assay him:

I have great hope in that; for in her youth There is a prone and speechless dialect, Such as move men; beside, she hath prosperous art

When she will play with reason and discourse, And well she can persuade.

Lucio. I pray she may: as well for the encouragement of the like, which else would stand under grievous imposition, as for the enjoying of thy life, who I would be sorry should be thus foolishly lost at a game of tick-tack. I'll to her.

Claud. I thank you, good friend Lucio.

Lucio. Within two hours.

Claud. Come, officer, away!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—A Monastery.

Enter DUKE and FRIAR THOMAS.

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.

Fri. T. May your Grace speak of it?

Duke. My holy sir, none better knows than you

How I have ever lov'd the life remov'd, And held in idle price to haunt assemblies Where youth, and cost, and witless bravery keeps. I have deliver'd to Lord Angelo—

A man of stricture and firm abstinence— My absolute power and place here in Vienna,

And he supposes me travell'd to Poland;

For so I have strew'd it in the common ear,

And so it is receiv'd. Now, pious sir,

You will demand of me why I do this?

Fri. T. Gladly, my lord.

Duke. We have strict statutes and most biting laws,—

The needful bits and curbs to headstrong steeds,—

Which for this fourteen years we have let sleep; 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 mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees,

Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead, And liberty plucks justice by the nose;

The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart Goes all decorum.

Fri. T. It rested in your Grace T' unloose this tied-up justice when you pleas'd;

And it in you more dreadful would have seem'd 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 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 impos'd the office,

Who may, in the ambush of my name, strike home,

And yet my nature never in the sight 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

Like a true friar. Moe reasons for this action At our more leisure shall I render you;

Only, this one: Lord Angelo is precise; Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses

That his blood flows, or that his appetite Is more to bread than stone: hence shall we see,

If power change purpose, what our seemers be.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—A Nunnery.

Enter ISABELLA and FRANCISCA.

Isab. And have you nuns no further privileges?

Fran. Are not these large enough?

Isab. Yes, truly: I speak not as desiring more,

But rather wishing a more strict restraint Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare.

Lucio. [Within.] Ho! Peace be in this place!

Isab. Who's that which calls?

Fran. 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. 9 When you have vow'd, you must not speak with men

But in the presence of the prioress: Then, if you speak, you must not show your face,

Or, if you show your face, you must not speak. He calls again; I pray you, answer him. [Exit.

Isab. Peace and prosperity! Who is't that calls?

Enter LUCIO.

Lucio. Hail, virgin, if you be, as those cheek-roses

Proclaim you are no less! Can you so stead me As bring me to the sight of Isabella,

A novice of this place, and the fair sister To her unhappy brother Claudio?

Isab. Why 'her unhappy brother?' let me ask; The rather for I now must make you know I am that Isabella and his sister.

Lucio. Gentle and fair, your brother kindly greets you:

Not to be weary with you, he's in prison. *Isab.* Woe me! for what?

Lucio. For that which, if myself might be his judge,

He should receive his punishment in thanks: 28 He hath got his friend with child.

Isab. Sir, make me not your story.

Lucio. It is true. I would not, though 'tis my familiar sin

With maids to seem the lapwing and to jest, 32 Tongue far from heart, play with all virgins so: I hold you as a thing ensky'd and sainted;

By your renouncement an immortal spirit, And to be talk'd with in sincerity,

As with a saint. *Isab.* You do blaspheme the good in mocking me.

Lucio. Do not believe it. Fewness and truth, 'tis thus:

Your brother and his lover have embrac'd: 40 As those that feed grow full, as blossoming time That from the seedness the bare fallow brings To teeming foison, even so her plenteous womb Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry.

Isab. Some one with child by him? My cousin Juliet?

Lucio. Is she your cousin?

Isab. Adoptedly; as school-maids change their names

By vain, though apt affection. *Lucio.* She it is.

Isab. O! let him marry her.

Lucio. This is the point. The duke is very strangely gone from hence;

Bore many gentlemen, myself being one, In hand and hope of action; but we do learn

By those that know the very nerves of state, His givings out were of an infinite distance

From his true-meant design. Upon his place, And with full line of his authority,

Governs Lord Angelo; a man whose blood Is very snow-broth; one who never feels

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

76

[ACT II

The wanton stings and motions of the sense,
But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge
With profits of the mind, study and fast.
He,—to give fear to use and liberty,
Which have for long run by the hideous law,
As mice by lions, hath pick'd out an act,
Under whose heavy sense your brother's life
Falls into forfeit: he arrests him on it,
And follows close the rigour of the statute,
To make him an example. All hope is gone,
Unless you have the grace by your fair prayer
To soften Angelo; and that's my pith of business
Twixt you and your poor brother.

Isab. Doth he so seek his life?

Lucio. He's censur'd him
Already; and, as I hear, the provost hath
A warrant for his execution.

Isab. Alas! what poor ability's in me
To do him good?

Lucio. Assay the power you have.

Isab. My power? alas! I doubt—

Lucio. Our doubts are traitors,
And make us lose the good we oft might win,
By fearing to attempt. Go to Lord Angelo,
And let him learn to know, when maidens

sue,
Men give like gods; but when they weep and
kneel,

All their petitions are as freely theirs
As they themselves would owe them.

Isab. I'll see what I can do.

Lucio. But speedily.

Isab. I will about it straight;
No longer staying but to give the Mother
Notice of my affair. I humbly thank you:
Commend me to my brother; soon at night
I'll send him certain word of my success.

Lucio. I take my leave of you.

Isab. Good sir, adieu. [Exeunt.

ACT II

SCENE I.—A Hall in ANGELO'S House.

Enter ANGELO, ESCALUS, a Justice, PROVOST,
Officers, and other Attendants.

Ang. 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.

Escal. Ay, but yet
Let us be keen and rather cut a little,
Than fall, and bruise to death. Alas! this
gentleman,

Whom I would save, had a most noble father.
Let but your honour know,—

Whom I believe to be most strait in virtue,—
That, in the working of your own affections,
Had time coher'd with place or place with
wishing,

Or that the resolute acting of your blood
Could have attain'd the effect of your own pur-
pose,

pose,

pose,

pose,

Whether you had not, some time in your life,
Err'd in this point which now you censure him,
And pull'd the law upon you.

Ang. 'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall. I not deny,

The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,
May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two
Guiltier than him they try; what's open made
to justice,

That justice seizes: what know the laws
That thieves do pass on thieves? 'Tis very preg-
nant,

The jewel that we find, we stoop and take it
Because we see it; but what we do not see
We tread upon, and never think of it.

You may not so extenuate his offence
For I have had such faults; but rather tell me,
When I, that censure him, do so offend,

Let mine own judgment pattern out my death,
And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die.

Escal. Be it as your wisdom will.

Ang. Where is the provost?

Prov. Here, if it like your honour.

Ang. See that Claudio
Be executed by nine to-morrow morning:
Bring him his confessor, let him be prepar'd;
For that's the utmost of his pilgrimage.

[Exit PROVOST.]

Escal. Well, heaven forgive him, and forgive
us all!

Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall;
Some run from brakes of ice, and answer none,
And some condemned for a fault alone.

Enter ELBOW and Officers, with FROTH and
POMPEY.

Elb. Come, bring them away: if these be
good people in a common-weal that do nothing
but use their abuses in common houses, I know
no law: bring them away.

Ang. How now, sir! What's your name, and
what's the matter?

Elb. If it please your honour, I am the poor
duke's constable, and my name is Elbow: I do
lean upon justice, sir; and do bring in here
before your good honour two notorious bene-
factors.

Ang. Benefactors! Well; what benefactors
are they? are they not malefactors?

Elb. If it please your honour, I know not well
what they are; but precise villains they are, that
I am sure of, and void of all profanation in the
world that good Christians ought to have.

Escal. This comes off well: here's a wise
officer.

Ang. Go to: what quality are they of? Elbow
is your name? why dost thou not speak, Elbow?

Pom. He cannot, sir: he's out at elbow.

Ang. What are you, sir?

Elb. He, sir! a tapster, sir; parcel-bawd; one
that serves a bad woman, whose house, sir, was,
as they say, plucked down in the suburbs; and
now she professes a hot-house, which, I think, is
a very ill house too.

Escal. How know you that?

SCENE I]

Elb. My wife, sir, whom I detest before heaven
and your honour,—

Escal. How! thy wife?

Elb. Ay, sir; whom, I thank heaven, is an
honest woman,—

Escal. Dost thou detest her therefore?

Elb. I say, sir, I will detest myself also, as
well as she, that this house, if it be not a bawd's
house, it is pity of her life, for it is a naughty
house.

Escal. How dost thou know that, constable?

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

Escal. By the woman's means?

Elb. Ay, sir, by Mistress Overdone's means;
but as she spit in his face, so she defied him.

Pom. Sir, if it please your honour, this is
not so.

Elb. Prove it before these varlets here, thou
honourable man, prove it.

Escal. [To ANGELO.] Do you hear how he
misplaces?

Pom. Sir, she came in, great with child, and
longing,—saving your honour's reverence,—for
stewed prunes. Sir, we had but two in the dish,
which at that very distant time stood, as it
were, in a fruit-dish, a dish of some three-
pence; your honours have seen such dishes;
they are not China dishes, but very good dishes.

Escal. Go to, go to: no matter for the dish, sir.

Pom. No, indeed, sir, not of a pin; you are
therein in the right: but to the point. As I
say, this Mistress Elbow, being, as I say, with
child, and being great-bellied, and longing, as I
said, for prunes, and having but two in the dish,
as I said, Master Froth here, this very man,
having eaten the rest, as I said, and, as I say,
paying for them very honestly; for, as you
know, Master Froth, I could not give you three-
pence again.

Froth. No, indeed.

Pom. Very well: you being then, if you be re-
membered, cracking the stones of the foresaid
prunes,—

Froth. Ay, so I did, indeed.

Pom. Why, very well: I telling you then, if
you be remembered, that such a one and such a
one were past cure of the thing you wot of, un-
less they kept very good diet, as I told you,—

Froth. All this is true.

Pom. Why, very well then.—

Escal. Come, you are a tedious fool: to the
purpose. What was done to Elbow's wife, that
he hath cause to complain of? Come me to
what was done to her.

Pom. Sir, your honour cannot come to that
yet.

Escal. No, sir, nor I mean it not.

Pom. Sir, but you shall come to it, by your
honour's leave. And, I beseech you, look into
Master Froth here, sir; a man of fourscore
pound a year, whose father died at Hallowmas.
Was't not at Hallowmas, Master Froth?

Froth. All-hallownd eve.

77

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

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

Froth. I have so, because it is an open room
and good for winter.

Pom. Why, very well then: I hope here be
truths.

Ang. This will last out a night in Russia, 144
When nights are longest there: I'll take my
leave,

And leave you to the hearing of the cause,
Hoping you'll find good cause to whip them all.

Escal. I think no less. Good-morrow to your
lordship.

[Exit ANGELO.]

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

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

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

Pom. I beseech your honour, ask me.

Escal. Well, sir, what did this gentleman to
her?

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

Escal. Ay, sir, very well.

Pom. Nay, I beseech you, mark it well.

Escal. Well, I do so.

Pom. Doth your honour see any harm in his
face?

Escal. Why, no.

Pom. I'll be supposed upon a book, his face
is the worst thing about him. Good, then; if his
face be the worst thing about him, how could
Master Froth do the constable's wife any harm?
I would know that of your honour.

Escal. He's in the right. Constable, what say
you to it?

Elb. First, an' it like you, the house is a
respected house; next, this is a respected fellow,
and his mistress is a respected woman.

Pom. By this hand, sir, his wife is a more
respected person than any of us all.

Elb. Varlet, thou liest: thou liest, wicked
varlet. The time is yet to come that she was
ever respected with man, woman, or child.

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

Escal. Which is the wiser here? Justice, or
Iniquity? Is this true?

Elb. O thou caitiff! O thou varlet! O thou
wicked Hannibal! I respected with her before
I was married to her? If ever I was respected
with her, or she with me, let not your worship
think me the poor duke's officer. Prove this,
thou wicked Hannibal, or I'll have mine action
of battery on thee.

Escal. If he took you a box o' th' ear, you
might have your action of slander too.

Elb. Marry, I thank your good worship for it.
What is't your worship's pleasure I shall do
with this wicked caitiff?

Escal. Truly, officer, because he hath some

offences in him that thou wouldest discover if thou couldst, let him continue in his courses till thou knowest what they are.

Elb. Marry, I thank your worship for it. Thou seest, thou wicked varlet, now, what's come upon thee: thou art to continue now, thou varlet, thou art to continue.

Escal. Where were you born, friend?

Froth. Here in Vienna, sir.

Escal. Are you of fourscore pounds a year?

Froth. Yes, an 't please you, sir.

Escal. So. [To POMPEY.] What trade are you of, sir?

Pom. A tapster; a poor widow's tapster.

Escal. Your mistress' name?

Pom. Mistress Overdone.

Escal. Hath she had any more than one husband?

Pom. Nine, sir; Overdone by the last.

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

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

Escal. Well: no more of it, Master Froth: farewell. [Exit FROTH.]—Come you hither to me, Master tapster. What's your name, Master tapster?

Pom. Pompey.

Escal. What else?

Pom. Bum, sir.

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

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

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

Pom. If the law would allow it, sir.

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

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

Escal. No, Pompey.

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

Escal. There are pretty orders beginning, I can tell you: it is but heading and hanging.

Pom. If you head and hang all that offend that way but for ten year together, you'll be glad to give out a commission for more heads. If this law hold in Vienna ten year, I'll rent the fairest house in it after threepence a bay. If you live to see this come to pass, say, Pompey told you so.

Escal. Thank you, good Pompey; and, in requital of your prophecy, hark you: I advise

you, let me not find you before me again upon any complaint whatsoever; no, not for dwelling where you do: if I do, Pompey, I shall beat you to your tent, and prove a shrewd Caesar to you. In plain dealing, Pompey, I shall have you whipt. So, for this time, Pompey, fare you well.

Pom. I thank your worship for your good counsel;—[Aside.] but I shall follow it as the flesh and fortune shall better determine. Whip me! No, no; let carman whip his jade; The valiant heart's not whipt out of his trade.

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

Elb. Seven year and a half, sir.

Escal. I thought, by your readiness in the office, you had continued in it some time. You say, seven years together?

Elb. And a half, sir.

Escal. Alas! it hath been great pains to you! They do you wrong to put you so oft upon't. Are there not men in your ward sufficient to serve it?

Elb. Faith, sir, few of any wit in such matters. As they are chosen, they are glad to choose me for them: I do it for some piece of money, and go through with all.

Escal. Look you bring me in the names of some six or seven, the most sufficient of your parish.

Elb. To your worship's house, sir?

Escal. To my house. Fare you well.

[Exit ELBOW.]

What's o'clock, think you?

Just. Eleven, sir.

Escal. I pray you home to dinner with me.

Just. I humbly thank you.

Escal. It grieves me for the death of Claudio; But there is no remedy.

Just. Lord Angelo is severe.

Escal. It is but needful:

Mercy is not itself, that oft looks so;

Pardon is still the nurse of second woe.

But yet, poor Claudio! There's no remedy.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—Another Room in the Same.

Enter PROVOST and a Servant.

Serv. He's hearing of a cause: he will come straight:

I'll tell him of you.

Prov. Pray you, do. [Exit Serv.] I'll know His pleasure; may be he will relent. Alas!

He hath but as offended in a dream:

All sects, all ages smack of this vice, and he To die for it!

Enter ANGELO.

Ang. Now, what's the matter, provost?

Prov. Is it your will Claudio shall die to-morrow?

Ang. Did I not tell thee, yea? hadst thou not order?

Why dost thou ask again?

Prov. Lest I might be too rash. Under your good correction, I have seen, When, after execution, Judgment hath Repented o'er his doom.

Ang. Go to; let that be mine: Do you your office, or give up your place, And you shall well be spar'd.

Prov. I crave your honour's pardon. What shall be done, sir, with the groaning Juliet?

She's very near her hour.

Ang. Dispose of her To some more fitter place; and that with speed.

Re-enter Servant.

Serv. Here is the sister of the man condemn'd Desires access to you.

Ang. Hath he a sister?

Prov. Ay, my good lord; a very virtuous maid.

And to be shortly of a sisterhood,

If not already.

Ang. Well, let her be admitted. [Exit Servant.]

See you the fornicatress be remov'd:

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

Enter ISABELLA and LUCIO.

Prov. God save your honour! [Offering to retire.]

Ang. Stay a little while.—[To ISABELLA.] You're welcome: what's your will?

Isab. I am a woful suitor to your honour, Please but your honour hear me.

Ang. Well: what's your suit?

Isab. 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.

Ang. Well; the matter?

Isab. I have a brother is condemn'd to die: I do beseech you, let it be his fault, And not my brother.

Prov. [Aside.] Heaven give thee moving graces!

Ang. Condemn the fault, and not the actor of it?

Why, every fault's condemn'd ere it be done. Mine were the very cipher of a function,

To fine the faults whose fine stands in record, And let go by the actor.

Isab. O just, but severe law! I had a brother, then.—Heaven keep your honour!

Lucio. [Aside to ISABELLA.] Give 't not o'er so: to him again, entreat him;

Kneel down before him, hang upon his gown; You are too cold; if you should need a pin,

You could not with more tame a tongue desire it. To him, I say!

Isab. Must he needs die?

Ang. Maiden, no remedy. *Isab.* Yes; I do think that you might pardon him,

And neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy.

Ang. I will not do't.

Isab. But can you, if you would?

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

Isab. But might you do't, and do the world no wrong,

If so your heart were touch'd with that remorse As mine is to him?

Ang. He's sentenc'd: 'tis too late.

Lucio. [Aside to ISABELLA.] You are too cold.

Isab. Too late? why, no; I, that do speak a word,

May call it back again. Well, believe this, No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,

Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword, The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,

Become them with one half so good a grace As mercy does.

If he had been as you, and you as he,

You would have slept like him; but he, like you, Would not have been so stern.

Ang. Pray you, be gone.

Isab. I would to heaven I had your potency, And you were Isabel! should it then be thus?

No; I would tell what 'twere to be a judge, And what a prisoner.

Lucio. [Aside to ISABELLA.] Ay, touch him; there's the vein.

Ang. Your brother is a forfeit of the law, And you but waste your words.

Isab. Alas! alas! Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;

And He that might the vantage best have took, Found out the remedy. How would you be,

If He, which is the top of judgment, should But judge you as you are? O! think on that,

And mercy then will breathe within your lips, Like man new made.

Ang. Be you content, fair maid; It is the law, not I, condemn your brother:

Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son, It should be thus with him: he must die to-morrow.

Isab. To-morrow! O! that's sudden! Spare him, spare him!

He's not prepar'd 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, be-think you:

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

Lucio. [Aside to ISABELLA.] Ay, well said.

Ang. The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept:

Those many had not dar'd to do that evil, If that the first that did th' edict infringe

Had answer'd for his deed: now 'tis awake, Takes note of what is done, and, like a prophet,

Looks in a glass, that shows what future evils, Either new, or by remissness new-conceiv'd,

And so in progress to be hatch'd and born,
Are now to have no successive degrees,
But, ere they live, to end.

Isab. Yet show some pity.

Ang. I show it most of all when I show justice;
For then I pity those I do not know, 101
Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall,
And do him right, that, answering one foul
wrong,

Lives not to act another. Be satisfied: 104
Your brother dies to-morrow: be content.

Isab. So you must be the first that gives this
sentence,
And he that suffers. O! it is excellent
To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.

Lucio. [Aside to *ISAB.*] That's well said. 109
Isab. Could great men thunder
As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,
For every pelting, petty officer 112
Would use his heaven for thunder; nothing but
thunder.

Merciful heaven!
Thou rather with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt
Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak 116
Than the soft myrtle; but man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape, 120
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep; who, with our spleens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

Lucio. [Aside to *ISAB.*] O, to him, to him,
wench! He will relent: 124
He's coming: I perceive 't.

Prov. [Aside.] Pray heaven she win him!
Isab. We cannot weigh our brother with our-
self:

Great men may jest with saints; 'tis wit in them,
But, in the less foul profanation. 128

Lucio. [Aside to *ISAB.*] Thou'rt in the right,
girl: more o' that.

Isab. That in the captain's but a choleric
word,

Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.

Lucio. [Aside to *ISAB.*] Art advis'd o' that?
more on't. 132

Ang. Why do you put these sayings upon me?

Isab. Because authority, though it err like
others,

Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself,
That skins the vice o' the top. Go to your bosom;

Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth
know 137

That's like my brother's fault: if it confess
A natural guiltiness such as is his,

Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue 140
Against my brother's life.

Ang. She speaks, and 'tis
Such sense that my sense breeds with it. Fare
you well.

Isab. Gentle my lord, turn back.

Ang. I will bethink me. Come again to-
morrow. 144

Isab. Hark how I'll bribe you. Good my
lord, turn back.

Ang. How! bribe me?

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

Lucio. [Aside to *ISAB.*] You had marr'd all
else. 148

Isab. 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 152
Ere sun-rise: prayers from preserved souls,
From fasting maids whose minds are dedicate
To nothing temporal.

Ang. Well; come to me to-morrow.

Lucio. [Aside to *ISAB.*] Go to; 'tis well: away!

Isab. Heaven keep your honour safe!

Ang. [Aside.] Amen:

For I am that way going to temptation,
Where prayers cross.

Isab. At what hour to-morrow
Shall I attend your lordship?

Ang. At any time 'fore noon. 160

Isab. Save your honour!

[*Exeunt ISABELLA, LUCIO, and PROVOST.*]

Ang. From thee; even from thy virtue!
What's this? what's this? Is this her fault or
mine?

The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?
Ha! 164

Not she; nor doth she tempt: but it is I,
That, lying by the violet in the sun,

Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,
Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be 168

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! 172

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 176
When judges steal themselves. What! do I love
her,

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

O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint, 180
With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous
Is that temptation that doth goad us on

To sin in loving virtue: never could the strumpet,
With all her double vigour, art and nature, 184

Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid
Subdues me quite. Ever till now,

When men were fond, I smil'd and wonder'd
how. [Exit.]

SCENE III.—A Room in a Prison.

Enter DUKE, disguised as a friar, and PROVOST.

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

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

Duke. Bound by my charity and my bless'd
order,

I come to visit the afflicted spirits 4

SCENE III]

Here in the prison: do me the common right
To let me see them and to make me know
The nature of their crimes, that I may minister
To them accordingly. 8

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

Look, here comes one: a gentlewoman of mine,
Who, falling in the flaws of her own youth,
Hath blister'd her report. She is with child, 12
And he that got it, sentenc'd; a young man
More fit to do another such offence,
Than die for this.

Enter JULIET.

Duke. When must he die?

Prov. As I do think, to-morrow.
[To *JULIET.*] I have provided for you: stay a
while, 17

And you shall be conducted.

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

Juliet. I do, and bear the shame most pa-
tiently. 20

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. 23

Duke. Love you the man that wrong'd you?

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

Duke. So then it seems your most offenceful
act

Was mutually committed?

Juliet. Mutually.

Duke. Then was your sin of heavier kind than
his. 28

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, 32

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. 36
Your partner, as I hear, must die to-morrow,
And I am going with instruction to him.

God's grace go with you! *Benedicite!* [Exit.]

Juliet. Must die to-morrow! O injurious love,
That respites me a life, whose very comfort 41
Is still a dying horror!

Prov. 'Tis pity of him. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.—A Room in ANGELO'S House.

Enter ANGELO.

Ang. 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, 4

As if I did but only chew his name,
And in my heart the strong and swelling evil
Of my conception. The state, whereon I studied, 8
Is like a good thing, being often read, 8
Grown fear'd and tedious; yea, my gravity,
Wherein, let no man hear me, I take pride,
Could I with boot change for an idle plume,
Which the air beats for vain. O place! O form!
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit, 13
Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls
To thy false seeming! Blood, thou art blood:
Let's write good angel on the devil's horn, 16
'Tis not the devil's crest.

Enter a Servant.

How now! who's there?

Serv. One Isabel, a sister,
Desires access to you.

Ang. Teach her the way.
[Exit Servant.]

O heavens! 20

Why does my blood thus muster to my heart,
Making both it unable for itself,
And dispossessing all my other parts
Of necessary fitness? 24

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-wish'd king, 28
Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness
Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love
Must needs appear offence.

Enter ISABELLA.

How now, fair maid!

Isab. I am come to know your pleasure. 32

Ang. That you might know it, would much
better please me,

Than to demand what 'tis. Your brother cannot
live.

Isab. Even so. Heaven keep your honour!

Ang. Yet may he live awhile; and, it may be,
As long as you or I: yet he must die. 37

Isab. Under your sentence?

Ang. Yea.

Isab. When, I beseech you? that in his re-
prieve, 40

Longer or shorter, he may be so fitted
That his soul sicken not.

Ang. Ha! fie, these filthy vices! It were as
good

To pardon him that hath from nature stolen 44
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, 48

As to put metal in restrained means
To make a false one.

Isab. 'Tis set down so in heaven, but not in
earth.

Ang. Say you so? then I shall pose you
quickly. 52

Which had you rather, that the most just law
Now took your brother's life; or, to redeem him,

Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness
As she that he hath stain'd?

Isab. Sir, believe this, 56
I had rather give my body than my soul.

Ang. I talk not of your soul. Our compell'd
sins

Stand more for number than for accompt.
Isab. How say you?

Ang. Nay, I'll not warrant that; for I can
speak 60

Against the thing I say. Answer to this:
I, now the voice of the recorded law,

Pronounce a sentence on your brother's life:
Might there not be a charity in sin 64

To save this brother's life?
Isab. Please you to do't,

I'll take it as a peril to my soul;
It is no sin at all, but charity.

Ang. Pleas'd you to do't, at peril of your soul,
Were equal poise of sin and charity. 69

Isab. That I do beg his life, if it be sin,
Heaven let me bear it! you granting of my suit,

If that be sin, I'll make it my morn prayer 72
To have it added to the faults of mine,

And nothing of your answer.
Ang. Nay, but hear me.

Your sense pursues not mine: either you are
ignorant,

Or seem so craftily; and that's not good. 76
Isab. Let me be ignorant, and in nothing good,

But graciously to know I am no better.
Ang. Thus wisdom wishes to appear most
bright

When it doth tax itself; as these black masks 80
Proclaim an enshield beauty ten times louder

Than beauty could, display'd. But mark me;
To be received plain, I'll speak more gross:

Your brother is to die. 84
Isab. So.

Ang. And his offence is so, as it appears,
Accountant to the law upon that pain.

Isab. True. 88
Ang. Admit no other way to save his life,—

As I subscribe not that, nor any other,
But in the loss of question,—that you, his sister,

Finding yourself desir'd of such a person, 92
Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,

Could fetch your brother from the manacles
Of the all-building law; and that there were

No earthly mean to save him, but that either 96
You must lay down the treasures of your body

To this suppos'd, or else to let him suffer;
What would you do?

Isab. As much for my poor brother, as myself:
That is, were I under the terms of death, 101

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
My body up to shame.

Ang. Then must your brother die.
Isab. And 'twere the cheaper way:

Better it were a brother died at once,
Than that a sister, by redeeming him, 108

Should die for ever.
Ang. Were not you then as cruel as the sen-
tence

That you have slander'd so?

Isab. Ignomy in ransom and free pardon 112
Are of two houses: lawful mercy

Is nothing kin to foul redemption.
Ang. You seem'd of late to make the law a
tyrant;

And rather prov'd the sliding of your brother 116
A merriment than a vice.

Isab. O, pardon me, my lord! it oft falls out,
To have what we would have, we speak not what
we mean.

I something do excuse the thing I hate, 120
For his advantage that I dearly love.

Ang. We are all frail.
Isab. Else let my brother die,

If not a feodary, but only he
Owe and succeed thy weakness. 124

Ang. Nay, women are frail too.
Isab. Ay, as the glasses where they view
themselves,

Which are as easy broke as they make forms.
Women! Help heaven! men their creation mar

In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times
frail, 129

For we are soft as our complexions are,
And credulous to false prints.

Ang. I think it well:
And from this testimony of your own sex,— 132

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; 137

If you be one, as you are well express'd
By all external warrants, show it now,

By putting on the destin'd livery.
Isab. I have no tongue but one: gentle my
lord, 140

Let me entreat you speak the former language.
Ang. Plainly conceive, I love you.

Isab. My brother did love Juliet; and you
tell me

That he shall die for't. 144
Ang. He shall not, Isabel, if you give me love.

Isab. I know your virtue hath a licence in't,
Which seems a little fouler than it is,

To pluck on others.
Ang. Believe me, on mine honour,

My words express my purpose. 149
Isab. Ha! little honour to be much believ'd,

And most pernicious purpose! Seeming, seem-
ing!

I will proclaim thee, Angelo; look for't: 152
Sign me a present pardon for my brother,

Or with an outstretch'd throat I'll tell the
world aloud

What man thou art.
Ang. Who will believe thee, Isabel?

My unsoil'd name, the austereness of my life, 156
My vouch against you, and my place i' the state,

Will so your accusation overweigh,
That you shall stifle in your own report

And smell of calumny. I have begun; 160
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 164

By yielding up thy body to my will,
Or else he must not only die the death,

But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
To lingering sufferance. Answer me to-morrow,

Or, by the affection that now guides me most,
I'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you, 170

Say what you can, my false o'erweighs your
true. *[Exit.]*

Isab. To whom should I complain? Did I
tell this, 172

Who would believe me? O perilous mouths!
That bear in them one and the self-same tongue,

Either of condemnation or approof,
Bidding the law make curt'sy to their will; 176

Hooking both right and wrong to th' appetite,
To follow as it draws. I'll to my brother:

Though he hath fallen by prompture of the blood,
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour, 180

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 abhor'd pollution. 184

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. 188

[Exit.]

ACT III

SCENE I.—A Room in the Prison.

Enter DUKE, as a friar, CLAUDIO, and PROVOST.
Duke. So then you hope of pardon from Lord
Angelo?

Claud. The miserable have no other medicine
But only hope:

I have hope to live, and am prepar'd to die. 4
Duke. Be absolute for death; either death
or life

Shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with
life:

If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
That none but fools would keep: a breath thou
art, 8

Servile to all the skyey influences,
That dost this habitation, where thou keep'st,

Hourly afflict. Merely, thou art death's fool;
For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun, 12

And yet run'st toward him still. Thou art not
noble:

For all th' accommodations that thou bear'st
Are nurs'd by baseness. Thou art by no means
valiant;

For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork 16
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 exist'st 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, forget'st. Thou art not
certain;

For thy complexion shifts to strange effects, 24

After the moon. If thou art rich, thou'rt poor;
For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,

Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
And death unloads thee. Friend hast thou none;

For thine own bowels, which do call thee sire,
The mere effusion of thy proper loins,

Do curse the gout, serpigo, and the rheum,
For ending thee no sooner. Thou hast nor
youth nor age; 32

But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,
Dreaming on both; for all thy blessed youth

Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms
Of palsied eld; and when thou art old and rich,

Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor
beauty, 37

To make thy riches pleasant. What's yet in this
That bears the name of life? Yet in this life

Lie hid moe thousand deaths: yet death we fear,
That makes these odds all even.

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

And, seeking death, find life: let it come on.
Isab. *[Within.]* What ho! Peace here; grace
and good company! 44

Prov. Who's there? come in: the wish de-
serves a welcome.

Duke. Dear sir, ere long I'll visit you again.
Claud. Most holy sir, I thank you. 47

Enter ISABELLA.

Is. My business is a word or two with Claudio.
Prov. And very welcome. Look, signior;

here's your sister.
Duke. Provost, a word with you.

Prov. As many as you please.
Duke. Bring me to hear them speak, where
I may be conceal'd. 52

[Exeunt DUKE and PROVOST.]
Claud. Now, sister, what's the comfort?

Isab. Why, as all comforts are; most good,
most good indeed.

Lord Angelo, having affairs to heaven,
Intends you for his swift ambassador, 56

Where you shall be an everlasting leiger:
Therefore, your best appointment make with
speed;

To-morrow you set on.
Claud. Is there no remedy?

Isab. None, but such remedy, as to save a
head 60

To cleave a heart in twain.
Claud. But is there any?

Isab. Yes, brother, you may live:
There is a devilish mercy in the judge,

If you'll implore it, that will free your life, 64
But fetter you till death.

Claud. Perpetual durance?
Isab. Ay, just; perpetual durance, a restraint,

Though all the world's vastidity you had,
To a determin'd scope.

Claud. But in what nature? 68
Isab. In such a one as, you consenting to't,

Would bark your honour from that trunk you
bear,

And leave you naked.
Claud. Let me know the point.