

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Written by

Andy Coughlan

Adapted from the play by William Shakespeare

FADE IN:

ACT I

EXT. MARS - DAY

A small personal spacecraft skims across a barren landscape of red rock, racing away between two vast columns of rock.

EXT. MARS - CONTINUOUS

The spacecraft rises over a hill and hurtles towards a great city rising out of a vast plain. A giant, shimmering bio-dome covers the city, glinting in the pale Martian sun.

Title: 'VIENNA, MARS - 2132'

INT. SPACECRAFT COCKPIT - DAY

ANGELO (30s), sits at the controls. His pale, androgynous features are embellished with strange, robotic protrusions around his jaw and forehead.

The city looms large before him.

A message pops up on a Heads Up Display: VIENNA IMMIGRATION CONTROL. PROCESSING...

The message changes to WELCOME HOME, LORD ANGELO.

Angelo stares ahead, his eyes cold and calculating.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - DAY

Angelo's craft flies through the bio-dome, causing it to wobble and spark with electricity.

Below him, a shanty town, apparently made up of the spare parts of spacecraft, nestles between huge gun emplacements that encircle the city.

Angelo flies on towards the tower blocks at the centre of the city, where huge billboards publicly advertise various gambling joints and dens of iniquity.

INT. SPACECRAFT COCKPIT - DAY

Angelo looks out at the signs, a frown on his face.

EXT. DUKE'S PALACE - DAY

Angelo sets down his craft atop a tall building at the city centre.

INT. DUKE'S PALACE - DAY

A servant throws open two grand looking doors and enters a large reception room with panoramic views of the city and the red desert beyond.

DUKE VICENTIO (50s), makes conversation with various lords, ladies, priests and attendants.

They all clutch small, elaborate devices, holding them as if they are prized objects. The Duke has two in his hands. He gives one to an older man, ESCALUS (70s), who takes it graciously.

The Duke notices the servant and dismisses the group, who break away into small clusters.

The servant approaches and whispers in the Duke's ear.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Call hither, I say, bid come before
us Angelo.

The attendant bows and hurries away.

The Duke takes Escalus by the arm.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

Escalus.

ESCALUS

My lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

We have strict statutes and most
biting laws. The needful bits and
curbs to headstrong weeds, which
for this nineteen years we have let
slip; like an o'ergrown lion in a
cave, that goes not out to prey.
Now, as fond fathers, having bound
up the threatening twigs of birch,
only to stick it in their
children's sight for terror, not to
use, in time the rod becomes more
mock'd than fear'd; and liberty
plucks justice by the nose; the
baby beats the nurse, and quite
athwart goes all decorum.

ESCALUS

It rested in your grace to unloose
this tied-up justice when you
pleas'd: and it in you more
dreadful would have seem'd than in
Lord Angelo.

DUKE VINCENTIO

I do fear, too dreadful: sith 'twas
my fault to give the people scope,
'Twould be my tyranny to strike and
gall them for what I bid them do:
for we bid this be done, when evil
deeds have their permissive pass
and not the punishment. Therefore
indeed, my cousin, what figure of
us think you he will bear? For you
must know, we have with special
soul elected him our absence to
supply, lent him our terror,
dress'd him with our love, and
given his deputation all the organs
of our own power: what think you of
it?

ESCALUS

If any in Vienna be of worth to
undergo such ample grace and
honour, it is Lord Angelo.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Look where he comes.

A servant leads Angelo across the room. Escalus eyes Angelo's
peculiar gait.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

There is a kind of character in thy
life, that to the observer doth thy
history fully unfold.

ANGELO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Angelo, heaven doth with us as we
with torches do, not light them for
themselves; for if our virtues did
not go forth of us, 'twere all
alike as if we had them not. But I
do bend my speech to one that can
my part in him advertise; hold
therefore, Angelo.

He offers Angelo the last of the ornate devices.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

In our remove be thou at full
ourselves; mortality and mercy in
Vienna live in thy tongue and
heart. Old Escalus, though first in
question, is thy secondary. Take
thy commission.

ANGELO

Now, good my lord, let there be
some more test made of my mettle,
before so noble and so great a
figure be stamp'd upon it.

DUKE VINCENTIO

No more evasion: We have with a
leaven'd and prepared choice
proceeded to you; therefore take
your honours.

Angelo takes the device.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

Our haste from hence is of so quick
condition that it prefers itself
and leaves unquestion'd matters of
needful value. We shall write to
you, as time and our concernings
shall importune, how it goes with
us, and do look to know what doth
befall you here. So, fare you well;
to the hopeful execution do I leave
you of your commissions. 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.

ANGELO

The heavens give safety to your
purposes!

ESCALUS

Lead forth and bring you back in
happiness!

DUKE VINCENTIO

I thank you. Fare you well.

EXT. CITY SUBURBS - DAY

Unlike the pristine nature of the city centre, the suburbs
are a sprawling, dirty mess; full of character and life.
Drunks, whores and street peddlers vie for attention among
the mass of people roving around.

There are security cameras here too which, unnoticed by the
crowds, come to life. Lights flicker on and they start to
rove around.

The signs that recently advertised gambling dens, and worse,
now proclaim various messages of eco-awareness: 'Save Our
Scrap,' 'Waste not, want not,' 'Make the most of your space,'
and 'Babies: You DO Have the Right, But NOT the Luxury.'

INT. A BROTHEL - DAY

A dimly lit den of iniquity, full of darkened recesses and scantily clad whores and rents boys with their well-dressed clientele.

MUSIC blares out.

Three men, LUCIO and TWO GENTLEMEN, dressed in smart attire, drink at a table. They are playing a card game, gambling for money. There are many empty glasses in front of them, and a fourth empty seat next to them.

LUCIO

If the Duke with the other Dukes
come not to composition with the
King of Hungary, why then all the
Dukes fall upon the king.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

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

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Amen.

LUCIO

Thou concludest like the
sanctimonious pirate, that went to
sea with the Ten Commandments, but
scraped one out of the table.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

'Thou shalt not steal'?

LUCIO

Ay, that he razed.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Why, 'twas a commandment to command
the captain and all the rest from
their functions: they put forth to
steal. There's not a soldier of us
all, that, in the thanksgiving
before meat, do relish the petition
well that prays for peace.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

I never heard any soldier dislike
it.

LUCIO

I believe thee; for I think thou
never wast where grace was said.

They all guffaw at the joke. Lucio plays a winning move, much to the annoyance of his companions, and scoops up his winnings.

Lucio spies the Madame of the establishment, MISTRESS OVERDONE (50's), heading in their direction.

LUCIO (CONT'D)
Behold, behold, where Madam Mitigation comes! I have purchased as many diseases under her roof as come to --

Mistress Overdone arrives at their table.

FIRST GENTLEMAN
How now! Which of your hips has the most profound sciatica?

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

SECOND GENTLEMAN
Who's that, I pray thee?

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

FIRST GENTLEMAN
Claudio to prison? 'tis not so.

MISTRESS OVERDONE
Nay, but I know 'tis so: I saw him arrested, saw him carried away; and, which is more, within these three days his head to be chopped off.

LUCIO
But, after all this fooling, I would not have it so. Art thou sure of this?

MISTRESS OVERDONE
I am too sure of it.

LUCIO
Believe me, this may be: he promised to meet me two hours since, and he was ever precise in promise-keeping. Away! Let's go learn the truth of it.

Lucio puts his winnings into a clutch purse, then he and the two Gentlemen leave Madam Overdone to pick up the half empty glasses.

She looks about at the deserted tables around her.

MISTRESS OVERDONE

Thus, what with the war, what with
the sweat, what with the gallows
and what with poverty, I am custom-
shrunk.

She takes the glasses to the bar, where she finds POMPEY, the
tapster.

MISTRESS OVERDONE (CONT'D)

How now! What's the news with you?

POMPEY

You have not heard of the
proclamation, have you?

MISTRESS OVERDONE

What proclamation, man?

POMPEY

All houses in the suburbs of Vienna
must be plucked down.

MISTRESS OVERDONE

And what shall become of those in
the city?

POMPEY

They shall stand for seed: they had
gone down too, but that a wise
burgher put in for them.

MISTRESS OVERDONE

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

POMPEY

To the ground, mistress.

MISTRESS OVERDONE

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

POMPEY

Come; fear you not: good
counsellors lack no clients: though
you change your place, you need not
change your trade; I'll be your
tapster still. Courage! There will
be pity taken on you: you that have
worn your eyes almost out in the
service, you will be considered.

EXT. SUBURBS - DAY

A crowd of people gather round a makeshift executioners stage upon which ABHORSON the executioner, dressed in little more than a loin cloth, prances about in a comic display, whipping the crowd up into a frenzy with his showman's axe, its handle fizzling with electricity.

Next to him, his head on a block, a terrified prisoner awaits his fate. After several mock attempts, and much jeering from the crowd, Abhorson brings down his huge axe upon his victims neck.

As the crowd cheer, the PROVOST (40's, hard looking, but with kind eyes) and his officers lead CLAUDIO, (handsome, early twenties), and several other terrified looking men, through the streets past the grisly display.

People turn to jeer and laugh at them.

Cameras mounted on walls follow them.

CLAUDIO

Fellow, why dost thou show me thus
to the world? Bear me to prison,
where I am committed.

The Provost sighs at Abhorson's theatrics and glances up at the camera's.

PROVOST

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

Lucio catches up with Claudio.

LUCIO

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

CLAUDIO

From too much liberty, my Lucio,
liberty: as surfeit is the father
of much fast, so every scope by the
immoderate use turns to restraint.
Our natures do pursue, like rats
that ravin down their proper bane,
a thirsty evil; and when we drink
we die.

LUCIO

If I could speak so wisely under an
arrest, I would send for certain of
my creditors! What's thy offence,
Claudio?

CLAUDIO
What but to speak of would offend
again.

LUCIO
What, is't murder?

CLAUDIO
No.

LUCIO
Lechery?

CLAUDIO
Call it so.

PROVOST
Away, sir! You must go.

CLAUDIO
(to the Provost)
One word, good friend.
(to Lucio)
Lucio, a word with you.

Lucio offers the Provost a chip of money. The Provost looks at the camera's again, then turns so he can take the chip unseen.

LUCIO
A hundred, if they'll do you any
good. Is lechery so look'd after?

CLAUDIO
Thus stands it with me: upon a true
contract I got possession of
Julietta's bed: You know the lady;
she is fast my wife, save that we
do the denunciation lack of outward
order: this we came not to, only
for propagation of a dower
remaining in the coffer of her
friends, from whom we thought it
meet to hide our love till time had
made them for us. But it chances
the stealth of our most mutual
entertainment with character too
gross is writ on Juliet.

As they talk, the Provost inspects the chip of money and deems it insufficient funds. He coughs politely, hinting he wants more. Lucio reluctantly offers more. This activity continues as the scene progresses.

LUCIO
With child, perhaps?

CLAUDIO

Unhappily, even so. And the new deputy now for the Duke awakes me all the enrolled penalties which have, like unscoured armour, hung by the wall so long that nineteen zodiacs have gone round and none of them been worn; and, for a name, now puts the drowsy and neglected act freshly on me: 'tis surely for a name.

LUCIO

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

CLAUDIO

I have done so, but he's not to be found. I prithee, Lucio, do me this kind service: this day my sister should the cloister enter and there receive her approbation: acquaint her with the danger of my state: implore her, in my voice, that she make friends to the strict deputy; bid herself assay him: I have great hope in that; for in her youth there is a prone and speechless dialect, such as move men; beside, she hath prosperous art when she will play with reason and discourse, and well she can persuade.

LUCIO

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

CLAUDIO

I thank you, good friend Lucio.

The Provost leads Claudio away.

INT. NUNNERY ATRIUM - DAY

Isabella stands in the echoing atrium of the nunnery. A sister helps her into the simple robes of a novice. She has a tablet in her hand and tries to read the basic rules of the order while the sister adjusts her new habit.

Another sister, FRANCISCA (60's), stands nearby, waiting for her, while yet another nun bustles about collecting Isabella's civilian clothes and puts them with Isabella's belongings, stashed in two travel bags.

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.

They move to go through into the main abbey, but are stopped by a banging on the door. The three sisters pause, slightly startled.

LUCIO (O.S.)

Ho! Peace be in this place!

ISABELLA

Who's that which calls?

FRANCISCA

It is a man's voice. Gentle Isabel, turn you the key, and know his business of him; you may, I may not; you are yet unsworn. When you have vow'd, you must not speak with men but in the presence of the prioress: then, if you speak, you must not show your face, or, if you show your face, you must not speak. He calls again; I pray you, answer him.

Francisca and the sisters hurry away.

ISABELLA

Peace and prosperity! Who is't that calls?

Isabella opens the huge doors.

LUCIO

Hail, virgin, if you be, as those cheek-roses proclaim you are no less! Can you so stead me as bring me to the sight of Isabella, a novice of this place and the fair sister to her unhappy brother Claudio?

ISABELLA

Why 'her unhappy brother'? Let me ask, the rather for I now must make you know I am that Isabella and his sister.

LUCIO

Gentle and fair, your brother kindly greets you: not to be weary with you, he's in prison.

ISABELLA

Woe me! For what?

LUCIO

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

ISABELLA

Sir, make me not your story.

LUCIO

It is true. I would not -- though 'tis my familiar sin with maids to seem the lapwing and to jest, tongue far from heart -- play with all virgins so: I hold you as a thing ensky'd and sainted. By your renouncement and immortal spirit, and to be talk'd with in sincerity, as with a saint.

ISABELLA

You do blaspheme the good in mocking me.

LUCIO

Do not believe it. Fewness and truth, 'tis thus: Your brother and his lover have embraced: As those that feed grow full, as blossoming time that from the seedness the bare fallow brings to teeming foison, even so her plenteous womb expresseth his full tilth and husbandry.

ISABELLA

Some one with child by him? My cousin Juliet?

LUCIO

Is she your cousin?

ISABELLA

Adoptedly; as school-maids change
their names by vain though apt
affection.

LUCIO

She it is.

ISABELLA

O, let him marry her.

LUCIO

This is the point. The Duke is gone
from hence. Upon his place, and
with full line of his authority,
governs Lord Angelo; a man whose
blood is very snow-broth; one who
never feels the wanton stings and
motions of the sense, but doth
rebate and blunt his natural edge
with profits of the mind, study and
fast. He -- to give fear to use and
liberty, which have for long run by
the hideous law, as mice by lions --
hath pick'd out an act, under whose
heavy sense your brother's life
falls into forfeit: he arrests him
on it; and follows close the rigour
of the statute, to make him an
example. All hope is gone, unless
you have the grace by your fair
prayer to soften Angelo: and that's
my pith of business 'twixt you and
your poor brother.

ISABELLA

Doth he so seek his life?

LUCIO

Has censured him already; and, as I
hear, the Provost hath a warrant
for his execution.

ISABELLA

Alas! what poor ability's in me to
do him good?

LUCIO

Assay the power you have.

ISABELLA

My power? Alas, I doubt --

LUCIO

Our doubts are traitors and make us
lose the good we oft might win by
fearing to attempt.

(MORE)

LUCIO (CONT'D)

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.

ACT II

INT. DUKE'S PALACE - DAY

ANGELO

We must not make a scarecrow of the
law, setting it up to fear the
birds of prey, and let it keep one
shape, till custom make it their
perch and not their terror.

ESCALUS

Ay, but yet let us be keen, and
rather cut a little, than fall, and
bruise to death. Alas, this
gentleman whom I would save, had a
most noble father! Let but your
honour know - whom I believe to be
most strait in virtue - that, in
the working of your own affections,
had time cohered with place or
place with wishing, or that the
resolute acting of your blood could
have attain'd the effect of your
own purpose, whether you had not
sometime in your life err'd in this
point which now you censure him,
and pull'd the law upon you.

ANGELO

'Tis one thing to be tempted,
Escalus, another thing to fall. I
not deny, the jury, passing on the
prisoner's life, may in the sworn
twelve have a thief or two guiltier
than him they try. What's open made
to justice, that justice seizes:
what know the laws that thieves do
pass on thieves? 'Tis very
pregnant, the jewel that we find,
we stoop and take't because we see
it; but what we do not see we tread
upon, and never think of it. You
may not so extenuate his offence
for I have had such faults; but
rather tell me, when I, that
censure him, do so offend, let mine
own judgment pattern out my death,
and nothing come in partial. Sir,
he must die.

ESCALUS

Be it as your wisdom will.

Angelo strides to a video wall.

ANGELO

Where is the provost?

The wall bursts into life. The Provost steps into view.

PROVOST

Here, if it like your honour.

ANGELO

See that Claudio be executed by
nine tomorrow morning: bring him
his confessor, let him be prepared;
for that's the utmost of his
pilgrimage.

The wall returns to looking like a wall.

ELBOW (a constable of the law), with his OFFICERS lead in
Pompey the Tapster and another man, FROTH, who looks
positively terrified.

ELBOW

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

ANGELO

How now, sir! What's your name? And
what's the matter?

ELBOW

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

ANGELO

Benefactors? Well; what benefactors
are they? Are they not malefactors?

ELBOW

If it please your honour, I know
not well what they are: but precise
villains they are, that I am sure
of.

ESCALUS

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

ANGELO

Go to: what quality are they of?

Elbow gives Angelo a blank look.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Elbow is your name? Why dost thou not speak, Elbow?

POMPEY

He cannot, sir; he's out at elbow!

Pompey guffaws at his own joke.

ANGELO

What are you, sir?

ELBOW

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

ESCALUS

How know you that?

ELBOW

My wife, sir. And 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. If my wife had been a woman cardinally given, she might have been accused in fornication, adultery, and all uncleanliness there.

POMPEY

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

ELBOW

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

ESCALUS

(to Angelo)

Do you hear how he misplaces?

POMPEY

Sir, she came in great with child; and longing, saving your honour's reverence, for stewed prunes;

(MORE)

POMPEY (CONT'D)

Sir, we had but two in the house,
which at that very instant time
stood, as it were, in a fruit-dish,
a dish of some three-pence; your
honours have seen such dishes; they
are not China dishes, but very
good dishes, --

ESCALUS

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

POMPEY

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, having eaten the
rest, as I said, and, as I say,
paying for them very honestly.

ESCALUS

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

ANGELO

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

ESCALUS

I think no less. Good morrow to
your lordship.

Angelo leaves.

ESCALUS (CONT'D)

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

POMPEY

Once, sir? There was nothing done
to her once.

ELBOW

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

POMPEY

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

ESCALUS

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

ELBOW

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

ESCALUS

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

ELBOW

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

ESCALUS

Truly, officer, because he hath
some offences in him that thou
wouldst discover if thou couldst,
let him continue in his courses
till thou knowest what they are.

ELBOW

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

ESCALUS

(to Pompey)

So. What trade are you of, sir?

POMPEY

Tapster; a poor widow's tapster.

ESCALUS

Your mistress' name?

POMPEY

Mistress Overdone.

ESCALUS

Hath she had any more than one husband?

POMPEY

Nine, sir; Overdone by the last.

ESCALUS

Nine! What's your name, Master tapster?

POMPEY

Pompey.

ESCALUS

What else?

POMPEY

Bum, sir.

ESCALUS

Troth, and your bum is the greatest thing about you; so that in the beastliest sense you are Pompey the Great. Pompey, you are partly a bawd, Pompey, howsoever you colour it in being a tapster, are you not?

POMPEY

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

ESCALUS

How would you live, Pompey? By being a bawd? What do you think of the trade, Pompey? Is it a lawful trade?

POMPEY

If the law would allow it, sir.

ESCALUS

But the law will not allow it, Pompey.

POMPEY

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

ESCALUS

No, Pompey.

POMPEY

Truly, sir, if your worship will take order for the drabs and the knaves, you need not to fear the bawds.

ESCALUS

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

POMPEY

If you head and hang all that
offend that way but for ten year
together, you'll be glad to give
out a commission for more heads: if
you live to see this come to pass,
say Pompey told you so.

INT. PRISON - DAY

The prison is a dark and dangerous place. Once it may have
been clean and bright, but time has given its gunmetal grey
surfaces a murky sheen.

The Provost does his rounds of the cells. He looks in on a
desolate Claudio. He sighs, makes up his mind about
something, and turns away.

INT. DUKE'S PALACE - LATER

Angelo stares out over the city. The video screen nearby
lights up with 'Incoming call'. Angelo accepts the call with
a wave of his hand. The Provost appears on the screen again.

ANGELO

Now, what's the matter. Provost?

PROVOST

Is it your will Claudio shall die
tomorrow?

ANGELO

Did not I tell thee yea? Hadst thou
not order? Why dost thou ask again?

PROVOST

Lest I might be too rash: Under
your good correction, I have seen,
when, after execution, judgment
hath repented o'er his doom.

ANGELO

Go to; let that be mine: Do you
your office, or give up your place,
and you shall well be spared.

PROVOST

I crave your honour's pardon.
What shall be done, sir, with the
groaning Juliet? She's very near
her hour.

ANGELO

Dispose of her to some more fitter
place, and that with speed.

A servant enters.

SERVANT

The sister of the man condemn'd
desires access to you.

ANGELO

Hath he a sister?

PROVOST

Ay, my good lord; a very virtuous
maid.

ANGELO

Well, let her be admitted.

Exit Servant.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

(to the Provost)

See you the fornicatress be
removed: let her have needful, but
not lavish, means; there shall be
order for't.

The servant leads in Isabella and Lucio.

PROVOST

Save your honour!

ANGELO

Stay a little while.

Angelo approaches Isabella, taking in her innocent beauty.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

You're welcome: what's your will?

ISABELLA

I am a woeful suitor to your
honour, please but your honour hear
me.

ANGELO

Well; what's your suit?

ISABELLA

There is a vice that most I do
abhor, and most desire should meet
the blow of justice; for which I
would not plead, but that I must;
for which I must not plead, but
that I am at war 'twixt will and
will not.

ANGELO

Well; the matter?

ISABELLA

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

ANGELO

Condemn the fault and not the actor of it? Why, every fault's condemn'd ere it be done: Mine were the very cipher of a function, to fine the faults whose fine stands in record, and let go by the actor.

ISABELLA

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

Isabella turns to leave, but Lucio stops her.

LUCIO

Give't not o'er so: to him again, entreat him; kneel down before him, hang upon his gown: you are too cold; if you should need a pin, you could not with more tame a tongue desire it: to him, I say!

Isabella turns again to Angelo.

ISABELLA

Must he needs die?

ANGELO

Maiden, no remedy.

ISABELLA

Yes; I do think that you might pardon him, and neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy.

ANGELO

I will not do it.

ISABELLA

But can you, if you would?

ANGELO

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

ISABELLA

But might you do't, and do the
world no wrong, if so your heart
were touch'd with that remorse as
mine is to him?

ANGELO

He's sentenced; 'tis too late.

ISABELLA

Too late? why, no; I, that do speak
a word may call it back again.
Well, believe this, no ceremony
that to great ones 'longs, not the
king's crown, nor the deputed
sword, the marshal's truncheon, nor
the judge's robe, become them with
one half so good a grace as mercy
does. If he had been as you and you
as he, you would have slipt like
him; but he, like you, would not
have been so stern.

ANGELO

Pray you, be gone.

ISABELLA

I would to heaven I had your
potency, and you were Isabel!
Should it then be thus? No; I would
tell what 'twere to be a judge, and
what a prisoner.

ANGELO

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

ISABELLA

Alas, alas! Why, all the souls that
were forfeit once; and He that
might the vantage best have took
found out the remedy. How would you
be, if He, which is the top of
judgment, should but judge you as
you are? O, think on that; and
mercy then will breathe within your
lips, like man new made.

ANGELO

Be you content, fair maid; It is
the law, not I, condemn your
brother: were he my kinsman,
brother, or my son, it should be
thus with him: he must die
tomorrow.

ISABELLA

Tomorrow! O, that's sudden! Spare him, spare him! He's not prepared for death. Even for our kitchens we kill the fowl of season: shall we serve heaven with less respect than we do minister to our gross selves? Good, good my lord, bethink you; who is it that hath died for this offence? There's many have committed it.

ANGELO

The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept: those many had not dared to do that evil, if the first that did the edict infringe had answer'd for his deed: now 'tis awake takes note of what is done; and, like a prophet, looks in a glass that shows what future evils, either new, or by remissness new-conceived, and so in progress to be hatch'd and born, are now to have no successive degrees, but, ere they live, to end.

ISABELLA

Yet show some pity.

ANGELO

I show it most of all when I show justice; for then I pity those I do not know, which a dismiss'd offence would after gall; and do him right that, answering one foul wrong, lives not to act another. Be satisfied; your brother dies tomorrow; be content.

ISABELLA

So you must be the first that gives this sentence, and he, that suffers. O, it is excellent to have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant. Could great men thunder as Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet, for every pelting, petty officer would use his heaven for thunder; nothing but thunder!

(MORE)

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Merciful Heaven, thou rather with
thy sharp and sulphurous bolt
split'st the unwedgeable and
gnarled oak than the soft myrtle:
but man, proud man, drest in a
little brief authority, most
ignorant of what he's most assured,
his glassy essence, like an angry
ape, plays such fantastic tricks
before high heaven as make the
angels weep; who, with our spleens,
would all themselves laugh mortal.

Angelo is somewhat taken aback by Isabella's force.

Lucio and the Provost watch on in awe.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

We cannot weigh our brother with
ourselves: great men may jest with
saints; 'tis wit in them, but in
the less foul profanation. That in
the captain's but a choleric word,
which in the soldier is flat
blasphemy.

Angelo, stunned by Isabella's onslaught, turns to the
Provost. With a flick of the wrist, he ends the call. He then
turns and moves close to Isabella.

ANGELO

Why do you put these sayings upon
me?

ISABELLA

Because authority, though it err
like others, hath yet a kind of
medicine in itself, that skins the
vice o' the top. Go to your bosom;
knock there, and ask your heart
what it doth know that's like my
brother's fault: if it confess a
natural guiltiness such as is his,
let it not sound a thought upon
your tongue against my brother's
life.

Angelo turns away.

ANGELO

(Aside)

She speaks, and 'tis such sense,
that my sense breeds with it.

(To Isabella)

Fare you well.

ISABELLA

Gentle my lord, turn back.

ANGELO

I will bethink me: come again tomorrow.

LUCIO

Go to; 'tis well; away!

ISABELLA

Heaven keep your honour safe!

Isabella leaves, followed by Lucio.

ANGELO

(Aside)

Amen: for I am that way going to temptation, where prayers cross.

ISABELLA

(Calls out)

At what hour tomorrow shall I attend your lordship?

ANGELO

At any time 'fore noon.

ISABELLA

'Save your honour!

Lucio drags her away.

ANGELO

From thee, even from thy virtue!

Angelo flicks his wrist again. Security camera footage of Isabella and Lucio leaving the building appears. The footage zooms in on Isabella's face.

Angelo stands, dwarfed by Isabella's face, a myriad of emotions coursing through him.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

What's this, what's this? Is this her fault or mine? The tempter or the tempted, who sins most? Ha! Not she: nor doth she tempt: but it is I that, lying by the violet in the sun, do as the carrion does, not as the flower, corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be that modesty may more betray our sense than woman's lightness? Having waste ground enough, shall we desire to raze the sanctuary and pitch our evils there? O, fie, fie, fie! What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo? Dost thou desire her foully for those things that make her good? O, let her brother live!

(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Thieves for their robbery have
authority when judges steal
themselves. What, do I love her,
that I desire to hear her speak
again, and feast upon her eyes?
What is't I dream on? O cunning
enemy, that, to catch a saint, with
saints dost bait thy hook!

On the screen Isabella and Lucio walk through a crowd of scantily clad women, Lucio's eyes wander, he pauses to speak with them, then bids Isabella goodbye.

The image pulls out wider. Angelo's eyes rove across the crowd.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Most dangerous is that temptation
that doth goad us on to sin in
loving virtue: never could the
strumpet, with all her double
vigour, art and nature, once stir
my temper; but this virtuous maid
subdues me quite. Even till now,
when men were fond, I smiled and
wonder'd how.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

Isabella walks back towards her monastery. She passes a monk who throws a blessing at her.

She bows and hurries away. The monk watches her and lowers his hood.

It's the Duke! He looks up at a drab looking building, the prison.

Glancing around, he pulls up his hood so his face is obscured once more and enters.

INT. PRISON - DAY

The Provost busies himself at a reception area, behind him banks of monitors show various prisoners in their cells.

The Duke approaches the Provost.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Hail to you, Provost! So I think
you are.

PROVOST

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Bound by my charity and my blest
order, I come to visit the
afflicted spirits here in the
prison. Do me the common right to
let me see them and to make me know
the nature of their crimes, that I
may minister to them accordingly.

PROVOST

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

JULIET (early 20's) enters, distressed and heavily pregnant.

PROVOST (CONT'D)

Look, here comes one: a gentlewoman
of mine, who, falling in the flaws
of her own youth, hath blister'd
her report: she is with child; and
he that got it, sentenced; a young
man more fit to do another such
offence than die for this.

DUKE VINCENTIO

When must he die?

PROVOST

As I do think, tomorrow.

(To Juliet)

I have provided for you: stay
awhile, and you shall be conducted.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

JULIET

I do, and bear the shame most
patiently.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Love you the man that wrong'd you?

JULIET

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

So then it seems your most
offenceful act was mutually
committed?

JULIET

Mutually.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Then was your sin of heavier kind
than his.

JULIET

I do confess it, and repent it,
father.

DUKE VINCENTIO

'Tis meet so, daughter: but lest
you do repent, as that the sin hath
brought you to this shame, which
sorrow is always towards ourselves,
not heaven, showing we would not
spare heaven as we love it, but as
we stand in fear --

JULIET

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

The Duke leaves and heads through into the main prison.

JULIET

Must die to-morrow!? O injurious
love, that respites me a life,
whose very comfort is still a dying
horror!

PROVOST

'Tis a pity of him.

INT. DUKE'S PALACE - DAY

Angelo stands alone, staring out at the city.

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: God in
my mouth, as if I did but only chew
his name; and in my heart the
strong and swelling evil of my
conception. The state, whereon I
studied is like a good thing, being
often read, grown fear'd and
tedious;

(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)

yea, my gravity, wherein -- let no man hear me -- I take pride, could I with boot change for an idle plume, which the air beats for vain. O place, O form, how often dost thou with thy case, thy habit, wrench awe from fools and tie the wiser souls to thy false seeming! Blood, thou art blood: let's write good angel on the devil's horn: 'Tis not the devil's crest.

A servant approaches him.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

How now! Who's there?

SERVANT

One Isabel, a sister, desires access to you.

ANGELO

Teach her the way.

The servant leaves.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

O heavens! Why does my blood thus muster to my heart, making both it unable for itself, and dispossessing all my other parts of necessary fitness? So play the foolish throngs with one that swoons; come all to help him, and so stop the air by which he should revive: and even so he general, subject to a well-wish'd king, quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness crowd to his presence, where their untaught love must needs appear offence.

Isabella enters.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

How now, fair maid?

ISABELLA

I am come to know your pleasure.

ANGELO

(Aside)

That you might know it, would much better please me than to demand what 'tis.

(To Isabella)

Your brother cannot live.

ISABELLA

Even so. Heaven keep your honour!

Isabella turns to leave.

ANGELO

Yet may he live awhile; and, it may be, as long as you or I. Yet he must die.

ISABELLA

Under your sentence?

ANGELO

Yea.

ISABELLA

When, I beseech you? That in his reprieve, longer or shorter, he may be so fitted that his soul sicken not.

ANGELO

Ha! fie, these filthy vices! It were as good to pardon him that hath from nature stolen a man already made, as to remit their saucy sweetness that do coin heaven's image in stamps that are forbid: 'tis all as easy falsely to take away a life true made as to put metal in restrained means to make a false one.

ISABELLA

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

ANGELO

Say you so? Then I shall pose you quickly. Which had you rather, that the most just law now took your brother's life; or, to redeem him, give up your body to such sweet uncleanness as she that he hath stain'd?

ISABELLA

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

ANGELO

I talk not of your soul. Our compelled sins stand more for number than for account.

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

ANGELO

Your sense pursues not mine: either you are ignorant, or seem so craftily; and that's not good.

ISABELLA

Let me be ignorant, and in nothing good, but graciously to know I am no better.

ANGELO

Thus wisdom wishes to appear most bright when it doth tax itself; as these black masks proclaim an enshield beauty ten times louder than beauty could, display'd. But mark me; to be received plain, I'll speak more gross: your brother is to die.

ISABELLA

So.

ANGELO

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

ISABELLA

True.

ANGELO

Admit no other way to save his life, -- as I subscribe not that, nor any other, but in the loss of question, -- that you, his sister, finding yourself desired of such a person, whose credit with the judge, or own great place, could fetch your brother from the manacles of the all-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?

ISABELLA

As much for my poor brother as myself: that is, were I under the terms of death, the impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies, and strip myself to death, as to a bed that longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield my body up to shame.

ANGELO

Then must your brother die.

ISABELLA

And 'twere the cheaper way: better it were a brother died at once, than that a sister, by redeeming him, should die for ever.

ANGELO

Were not you then as cruel as the sentence that you have slander'd so?

ISABELLA

Ignomy in ransom and free pardon are of two houses: lawful mercy is nothing kin to foul redemption.

ANGELO

You seem'd of late to make the law a tyrant; and rather proved the sliding of your brother a merriment than a vice.

ISABELLA

O, pardon me, my lord; it oft falls out, to have what we would have, we speak not what we mean: I something do excuse the thing I hate, for his advantage that I dearly love.

ANGELO

We are all frail. Nay, women are frail too.

ISABELLA

Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves; which are as easy broke as they make forms.

ANGELO

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;

(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)

if you be one, as you are well
express'd by all external warrants,
show it now, by putting on the
destined livery.

ISABELLA

I have no tongue but one: gentle my
lord, let me entreat you speak the
former language.

ANGELO

Plainly conceive, I love you.

ISABELLA

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

ANGELO

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

ISABELLA

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

ANGELO

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

ISABELLA

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

ANGELO

Who will believe thee, Isabel? My
unsoil'd name, the austereness of
my life, my vouch against you, and
my place i' the state, will so your
accusation overweigh, that you
shall stifle in your own report and
smell of calumny. I have begun, and
now I give my sensual race the
rein: fit thy consent to my sharp
appetite; lay by all nicety and
prolixious blushes, that banish
what they sue for; redeem thy
brother by yielding up thy body to
my will; or else he must not only
die the death, but thy unkindness
shall his death draw out to
lingering sufferance.

(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Answer me tomorrow, or, by the affection that now guides me most, I'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you, say what you can, my false o'erweighs your true.

Isabella turns and runs.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Isabella stumbles from the Duke's Palace, distraught. She stumbles down the street, trying to talk to anyone who'll listen. Everyone just brushes her aside.

ISABELLA

To whom should I complain? Did I tell this, who would believe me? O perilous mouths, that bear in them one and the self-same tongue, either of condemnation or approval; Bidding the law make court'sy to their will: hooking both right and wrong to the appetite, to follow as it draws! I'll to my brother: though he hath fallen by prompture of the blood, yet hath he in him such a mind of honour. That, had he twenty heads to tender down on twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up, before his sister should her body stoop to such abhorred pollution. Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die: more than our brother is our chastity. I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request, and fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest.

ACT III

INT. PRISON - DAY

The Duke sits with Claudio in his cell.

DUKE VINCENTIO

So then you hope of pardon from Lord Angelo?

CLAUDIO

The miserable have no other medicine but only hope: I've hope to live, and am prepared to die.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Be absolute for death; either death
or life shall thereby be the
sweeter.

CLAUDIO

I humbly thank you. To sue to live,
I find I seek to die; and, seeking
death, find life: let it come on.

The Provost opens the cell door to reveal Isabella. She steps
forward and holds Claudio in a deep embrace.

The Duke steps out of the cell.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Provost, bring me to hear them
speak.

The Provost leads the Duke away.

CLAUDIO

Now, sister, what's the comfort?

ISABELLA

Why, as all comforts are; most
good, most good indeed. Lord
Angelo, having affairs to heaven,
intends you for his swift
ambassador, where you shall be an
everlasting leiger: therefore your
best appointment make with speed;
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?

ISABELLA

Yes, brother, you may live: there
is a devilish mercy in the judge,
if you'll implore it, that will
free your life, but fetter you till
death.

CLAUDIO

Perpetual durance?

ISABELLA

Ay, just; perpetual durance.

CLAUDIO

But in what nature?

ISABELLA

In such a one as, you consenting to't, would bark your honour from that trunk you bear, and leave you naked.

CLAUDIO

Let me know the point.

ISABELLA

O, I do fear thee, Claudio; and I quake, lest thou a feverous life shouldst entertain, and six or seven winters more respect than a perpetual honour. Darest thou die? The sense of death is most in apprehension; and the poor beetle, that we tread upon, in corporal sufferance finds a pang as great as when a giant dies.

CLAUDIO

Why give you me this shame? Think you I can a resolution fetch from flowery tenderness? If I must die, I will encounter darkness as a bride, and hug it in mine arms.

INT. PRISON RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

The Duke and the Provost watch Isabella and Claudio on a monitor.

ISABELLA

There spake my brother; there my father's grave did utter forth a voice. Yes, thou must die: thou art too noble to conserve a life in base appliances. This outward-sainted deputy, whose settled visage and deliberate word nips youth i' the head and follies doth emmew as falcon doth the fowl, is yet a devil, his filth within being cast, he would appear a pond as deep as hell.

CLAUDIO

The prenzie Angelo?

The Duke reacts to this.

INT. PRISON - CONTINUOUS

ISABELLA

O, 'tis the cunning livery of hell,
the damned'st body to invest and
cover in prenzie guards! Dost thou
think, Claudio? If I would yield
him my virginity, thou mightst be
freed.

CLAUDIO

O heavens! It cannot be.

ISABELLA

Yes, he would give't thee, from
this rank offence, so to offend him
still. This night's the time that I
should do what I abhor to name, or
else thou diest 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.

CLAUDIO

Thanks, dear Isabel.

ISABELLA

Be ready, Claudio, for your death
tomorrow.

CLAUDIO

Yes. Has he affections in him, that
thus can make him bite the law by
the nose, when he would force it?
Sure, it is no sin, or of the
deadly seven, it is the least.

ISABELLA

Which is the least?

CLAUDIO

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

ISABELLA

What says my brother?

CLAUDIO

Death is a fearful thing.

ISABELLA

And shamed life a hateful.

CLAUDIO

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where; to lie in cold obstruction and to rot; this sensible warm motion to become a kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit to bathe in fiery floods, or to reside in thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice; to be imprison'd in the viewless winds, and blown with restless violence round about the pendent world; or to be worse than worst of those that lawless and uncertain thought imagine howling: 'tis too horrible! The weariest and most loathed worldly life that age, ache, penury and imprisonment can lay on nature is a paradise to what we fear of death.

ISABELLA

Alas, alas!

CLAUDIO

Sweet sister, let me live: what sin you do to save a brother's life, nature dispenses with the deed so far that it becomes a virtue.

ISABELLA

O you beast! O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch! Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice? Is't not a kind of incest, to take life from thine own sister's shame? What should I think? Heaven shield my mother play'd my father fair! For such a warped slip of wilderness ne'er issued from his blood. Take my defiance! Die, perish! Might but my bending down relieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed: I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death, no word to save thee.

CLAUDIO

Nay, hear me, Isabel.

ISABELLA

O, fie, fie, fie! Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade. Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd: 'Tis best thou diest quickly.

Isabella storms out of the cell.

CLAUDIO
O hear me, Isabella!

INT. PRISON RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Isabella hurries through the reception, the Duke intercepts her.

DUKE VINCENTIO
Vouchsafe a word, young sister, but
one word.

ISABELLA
What is your will?

DUKE VINCENTIO
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 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 returns and I
can speak to him, I will open my
lips in vain, or discover his
government.

DUKE VINCENTIO
That shall not be much amiss: Yet,
as the matter now stands, he will
avoid your accusation; he made
trial of you only. Therefore fasten
your ear on my advisings: to the
love I have in doing good a remedy
presents itself.

ISABELLA
I have spirit to do anything that
appears not foul in the truth of my
spirit.

DUKE VINCENTIO
Have you not heard speak of
Mariana, the sister of Frederick
the great soldier?

ISABELLA
I have heard of the lady.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ISABELLA

Did Angelo so leave her?

DUKE VINCENTIO

Left her in her tears, and dried not one of them with his comfort; swallowed his vows whole, pretending in her discoveries of dishonour.

ISABELLA

But how out of this can she avail?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ISABELLA

Show me how, good father.

DUKE VINCENTIO

This forenamed maid hath yet in her the continuance of her first affection: his unjust unkindness, that in all reason should have quenched her love, hath made it more violent and unruly. Go you to Angelo; answer his requiring with a plausible obedience; 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. What think you of it?

ISABELLA

The image of it gives me content
already.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Haste you speedily to Angelo: if
for this night he entreat you to
his bed, give him promise of
satisfaction. I will presently to
Saint Luke's: there, at the Moated
Grange, resides this dejected
Mariana. At that place call upon
me; and dispatch with Angelo, that
it may be quickly.

ISABELLA

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

INT. PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Claudio sits in his cell, dejected.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

CLAUDIO

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

A commotion outside the cell heralds the arrival of Elbow
with Pompey.

ELBOW (O.S.)

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

O heavens! What stuff is here?

INT. PRISON RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

The Duke comes out to investigate.

POMPEY

'Twas never merry world since, of
two usuries, the merriest was put
down, and the worser allowed by
order of law; a furred gown to keep
him warm - and furred with fox and
lamb-skins too, to signify that
craft, being richer than innocency,
stands for the facing.

ELBOW

Come your way, sir. 'Bless you,
good father friar.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ELBOW

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

Pompey, frustrated and unseen by Elbow, mimes unpicking a
chastity belt to the Duke.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Fie, sirrah! A bawd, a wicked bawd!

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

POMPEY

Indeed, it does stink in some sort,
sir; but yet, sir, I would prove --

ELBOW

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

Lucio staggers in, blind drunk.

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? 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.

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

And you.

ELBOW

Come your ways, sir; come.

POMPEY

You will not bail me, then, sir?

LUCIO

Then, Pompey, nor now. What news
abroad, friar? What news?

ELBOW

Come your ways, sir; come.

LUCIO

Go to kennel, Pompey; go.

Elbow throws Pompey into an empty cell.

LUCIO (CONT'D)

What news, friar, of the Duke?

DUKE VINCENTIO

I know none. Can you tell me of
any?

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

It was a mad fantastical trick of
him to steal from the state, and
usurp the beggary he was never born
to. Lord Angelo Dukes it well in
his absence; he puts transgression
to 't.

DUKE VINCENTIO

He does well in it.

LUCIO

A little more lenity to lechery
would do no harm in him.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

They say this Angelo was not made
by man and woman after this
downright way of creation: is it
true, think you?

DUKE VINCENTIO

How should he be made, then?

LUCIO

Some report a sea-maid spawned him;
some, that he was begot between two
stock-fishes. But it is certain
that when he makes water his urine
is congealed ice; that I know to be
true.

DUKE VINCENTIO

You are pleasant, sir, and speak
apace.

LUCIO

Why, what a ruthless thing is this
in him, for the rebellion of a
codpiece to take away the life of a
man! Would the Duke that is absent
have done this? Ere he would have
hanged a man for the getting a
hundred bastards, he would have
paid for the nursing a thousand: he
had some feeling of the sport: he
knew the service, and that
instructed him to mercy.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

O, sir, you are deceived.

DUKE VINCENTIO

'Tis not possible.

LUCIO

Who, not the Duke? Yes, your beggar
of fifty; and his use was to put a
ducat in her clack-dish. He would
be drunk too.

DUKE VINCENTIO

You do him wrong, surely.

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

What, I prithee, might be the
cause?

LUCIO

No, pardon; 'tis a secret must be locked within the teeth and the lips: but this I can let you understand, the greater file of the subject held the Duke to be wise.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Wise! Why, no question but he was.

LUCIO

A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Either this is the envy in you, folly, or mistaking: the very stream of his life and the business he hath helmed must upon a warranted need give him a better proclamation. Let him be but 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.

LUCIO

Sir, I know him, and I love him.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

Come, sir, I know what I know.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

I fear you not.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

I'll be hanged first: thou art deceived in me, friar.

Chaos breaks out as Escalus and some officers lead in Mistress Overdone and some of her women and men.

PROVOST

Go; away with her to prison!

Both the Duke and Lucio reacts to their presence.

LUCIO

But no more of this. Farewell.

Lucio scuttles away. The Duke also backs away and watches.

Mistress Overdone tears herself away from the officers and throws herself at Escalus.

MISTRESS OVERDONE

Good my lord, be good to me; your honour is accounted a merciful man; good my lord.

ESCALUS

Double and treble admonition, and still forfeit in the same kind! This would make mercy swear and play the tyrant.

PROVOST

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

MISTRESS OVERDONE

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

ESCALUS

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

The officers take Mistress Overdone away.

ESCALUS (CONT'D)

Provost, my brother Angelo will not be altered; Claudio must die tomorrow: let him be furnished with divines, and have all charitable preparation. If my brother wrought by my pity, it should not be so with him.

PROVOST

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

ESCALUS

Good even, good father.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Bliss and goodness on you!

ESCALUS

Of whence are you?

DUKE VINCENTIO

Not of this country: I am a brother of gracious order, late come from the see in special business from his holiness. I pray you, sir, of what disposition was the Duke?

ESCALUS

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

What pleasure was he given to?

ESCALUS

Rather rejoicing to see another merry, than merry at any thing which professed to make him rejoice: a gentleman of all temperance. But leave we him to his events, with a prayer they may prove prosperous; and let me desire to know how you find Claudio prepared?

DUKE VINCENTIO

He professes to have received no sinister measure from his judge, but most willingly humbles himself to the determination of justice: yet had he framed to himself many deceiving promises of life; which I by my good leisure have discredited to him, and now is he resolved to die.

ESCALUS

You have paid the heavens your function, and the prisoner the very debt of your calling. I have laboured for the poor gentleman to the extremest shore of my modesty: but my brother-justice have I found so severe, that he hath forced me to tell him he is indeed Justice.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ACT IV

EXT. MOATED GRANGE - EVENING

The Moated Grange is a burlesque club.

The Duke, still dressed as a monk, approaches the dimly lit club and strolls right up to the VIP entrance, much to the bemusement of the people queueing to get in.

The Duke lowers his hood discretely to the bouncer, who greets him warmly and ushers him through.

INT. MOATED GRANGE - EVENING

Up on the stage MARIANA (early 30's) plucks at a futuristic looking harp and sings a mournful song. Mariana sports similar technological protrusions and implants around her face to those of Angelo.

She completes her song to polite applause, and leaves the stage.

The Duke approaches her.

MARIANA

I cry you mercy, sir; and well
could wish you had not found me
here so musical: let me excuse me,
and believe me so, my mirth it much
displeased, but pleased my woe.

DUKE VINCENTIO

'Tis good; though music oft hath
such a charm to make bad good, and
good provoke to harm. I pray, you,
tell me, hath anybody inquired for
me here to-day? Much upon this time
have I promised here to meet.

MARIANA

You have not been inquired after: I
have been here all day.

Isabella arrives.

DUKE VINCENTIO

I do constantly believe you. The
time is come even now. I shall
crave your forbearance a little:
maybe I will call upon you anon,
for some advantage to yourself.

MARIANA

I am always bound to you.

Mariana leaves them.

On the stage behind them a burlesque show starts up, much to
Isabella's consternation.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Very well met, and well come.
What is the news from this good
deputy?

ISABELLA

He hath a garden circummured with
brick, whose western side is with a
vineyard back'd; and to that
vineyard is a planched gate, that
makes his opening with this bigger
key: this other doth command a
little door which from the vineyard
to the garden leads; there have I
made my promise upon the heavy
middle of the night to call upon
him.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ISABELLA

No, none, but only a repair i' the dark; and that I have possess'd him my most stay can be but brief; for I have made him know I have a servant comes with me along, that stays upon me, whose persuasion is I come about my brother.

DUKE VINCENTIO

'Tis well borne up. I have not yet made known to Mariana a word of this. Come forth!

Mariana joins them.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

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

ISABELLA

I do desire the like.

DUKE VINCENTIO

(to Mariana)

Take, then, this your companion by the hand, who hath a story ready for your ear. I shall attend your leisure: but make haste; the vaporous night approaches.

Mariana leads Isabella away. The Duke turns to enjoy the show.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Provost calls on Pompey in his cell.

PROVOST

Come hither, sirrah. Can you cut off a man's head?

POMPEY

If the man be a bachelor, sir, I can; but if he be a married man, he's his wife's head, and I can never cut off a woman's head.

PROVOST

Come, sir, leave me your snatches, and yield me a direct answer. Tomorrow morning are to die Claudio and Barnardine.

(MORE)

PROVOST (CONT'D)

Here is in our prison a common executioner, who in his office lacks a helper: if you will take it on you to assist him, it shall redeem you from your gyves; if not, you shall have your full time of imprisonment and your deliverance with an unpitied whipping, for you have been a notorious bawd.

POMPEY

Sir, I have been an unlawful bawd time out of mind; but yet I will be content to be a lawful hangman. I would be glad to receive some instruction from my fellow partner.

PROVOST

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

Abhorson, the executioner, joins them.

ABHORSON

Do you call, sir?

PROVOST

Sirrah, here's a fellow will help you tomorrow in your execution. If you think it meet, compound with him by the year, and let him abide here with you; if not, use him for the present and dismiss him. He cannot plead his estimation with you; he hath been a bawd.

ABHORSON

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

PROVOST

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

The Provost leaves them.

POMPEY

Pray, sir, by your good favour,-- for surely, sir, a good favour you have, but that you have a hanging look, -- do you call, sir, your occupation a mystery?

ABHORSON

Ay, sir; a mystery

POMPEY

Painting, sir, I have heard say, is a mystery; and your whores, sir, being members of my occupation, using painting, do prove my occupation a mystery: but what mystery there should be in hanging, if I should be hanged, I cannot imagine.

INT. MOATED GRANGE - EVENING

The Duke waits patiently, enjoying the show.

Mariana and Isabella rejoin him.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Welcome, how agreed?

ISABELLA

She'll take the enterprise upon her, father, if you advise it.

DUKE VINCENTIO

It is not my consent, but my entreaty too.

ISABELLA

Little have you to say when you depart from him, but, soft and low, 'Remember now my brother.'

MARIANA

Fear me not.

INT. PRISON - NIGHT

Abhorson and Pompey approach the Provost.

PROVOST

Are you agreed?

POMPEY

Sir, I will serve him; for I do find your hangman is a more penitent trade than your bawd; he doth oftener ask forgiveness.

PROVOST

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

ABHORSON

Come on, bawd; I will instruct thee in my trade.

Abhorson leads Pompey away.

POMPEY

I do desire to learn, sir: and I hope, if you have occasion to use me for your own turn, you shall find me yare; for truly, sir, for your kindness I owe you a good turn.

PROVOST

Call hither Barnardine and Claudio!

An Officer leads Claudio to the Provost.

PROVOST (CONT'D)

Look, here's the warrant, Claudio, for thy death: 'tis now dead midnight, and by eight to-morrow thou must be made immortal. Where's Barnardine?

CLAUDIO

As fast lock'd up in sleep as guiltless labour when it lies starkly in the traveller's bones: he will not wake.

The Duke enters, disguised still as the Monk.

PROVOST

Who can do good on him? Well, go, prepare yourself.

The Officer leads Claudio away.

PROVOST (CONT'D)

Welcome father.

DUKE VINCENTIO

The best and wholesomest spirits of the night envelope you, good Provost! Who call'd here of late?

PROVOST

None, since the curfew rung.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Not Isabel?

PROVOST

No.

DUKE VINCENTIO

They will, then, ere't be long.

PROVOST

What comfort is for Claudio?

DUKE VINCENTIO

There's some in hope. Have you no countermand for Claudio yet, but he must die tomorrow?

PROVOST

None, sir, none.

DUKE VINCENTIO

As near the dawning, Provost, as it is, you shall hear more ere morning.

PROVOST

Happily you something know; yet I believe there comes no countermand.

A ping announces the arrival of an incoming video call.

PROVOST (CONT'D)

This is his lordship.

DUKE VINCENTIO

What news?

The Provost flicks his hand and Angelo appears on the monitors. He seems ill at ease.

PROVOST

My Lord?

ANGELO

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.

Angelo flicks his hand and the call ends.

PROVOST

What say you to this, sir?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

The Provost leads the Duke to Barnardine's cell.

PROVOST

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

PROVOST

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

It is now apparent?

PROVOST

Most manifest, and not denied by
himself.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Hath he born himself penitently in
prison? How seems he to be touched?

PROVOST

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

He wants advice.

PROVOST

He will hear none: he hath evermore
had the liberty of the prison; give
him leave to escape hence, he would
not.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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;

(MORE)

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)
for the which you are to do me both
a present and a dangerous courtesy.

PROVOST
Pray, sir, in what?

DUKE VINCENTIO
In the delaying death.

PROVOST
A lack, how may I do it, having the
hour limited, and an express
command, under penalty, to deliver
his head in the view of Angelo?

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

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

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

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

DUKE VINCENTIO
Were you sworn to the Duke, or to
the deputy?

PROVOST
To him, and to his substitutes.

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

PROVOST
But what likelihood is in that?

DUKE VINCENTIO

Not a resemblance, but a certainty.
Yet since I see you fearful, that
neither my coat, integrity, nor
persuasion can with ease attempt
you, I will go further than I
meant, to pluck all fears out of
you.

He takes from within the folds of his cloak, one of the
devices he issued to Angelo and Escalus when he gave them
their their commissions.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

Look you, sir, here is the hand and
seal of the Duke: you know the
character, I doubt not; and the
signet is not strange to you.

PROVOST

I know them both.

DUKE VINCENTIO

The contents of this is the return
of the Duke: you shall anon over-
read it at your pleasure; where you
shall find, within these two days
he will be here. This is a thing
that Angelo knows not; for he this
very day receives letters of
strange tenor; perchance of the
Duke's death; perchance entering
into some monastery; but, by
chance, nothing of what is writ.
Call your executioner, and off with
Barnardine's head: I will give him
a present shrift and advise him for
a better place. Come away; it is
almost clear dawn.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Pompey stands before the bank of monitors, staring at the
executioners axe. It looks incongruous against the
technological surroundings.

Abhorson arrives and wakes him from his reverie.

ABHORSON

Sirrah, bring Barnardine hither.

Pompey walks with two Officers down to Barnardine's cell. The
Officers open the cell.

POMPEY

Master Barnardine! you must rise
and be hanged. Master Barnardine!

BARNARDINE

(Within)

A pox o' your throats! Who makes
that noise there? What are you?

POMPEY

Your friends, sir; the hangman. You
must be so good, sir, to rise and
be put to death.

BARNARDINE

(Within)

Away, you rogue, away! I am sleepy.

ABHORSON

Tell him he must awake, and that
quickly too.

POMPEY

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

ABHORSON

Go in to him, and fetch him out.

POMPEY

He is coming, sir, he is coming.

Barnardine slouches from his cell.

BARNARDINE

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

ABHORSON

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

BARNARDINE

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

POMPEY

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

ABHORSON

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

The Duke, dressed as the Monk, enters the cell area.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

BARNARDINE

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

BARNARDINE

I swear I will not die to-day for any man's persuasion.

DUKE VINCENTIO

But hear you.

BARNARDINE

Not a word: if you have any thing to say to me, come to my ward; for thence will not I today.

Barnadine storms back into his cell.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Unfit to live or die: O gravel heart!

The Provost arrives.

PROVOST

Now, sir, how do you find the prisoner?

DUKE VINCENTIO

A creature unprepared, unmeet for death; and to transport him in the mind he is were damnable.

PROVOST

Here in the prison, father, there died this morning of a cruel fever one Ragozine, a most notorious pirate, a man of Claudio's years; his beard and head just of his colour. What if we do omit this reprobate till he were well inclined;

(MORE)

PROVOST (CONT'D)
and satisfy the deputy with the
visage of Ragozine, more like to
Claudio?

DUKE VINCENTIO
O, 'tis an accident that heaven
provides! Dispatch it presently;
the hour draws on prefix'd by
Angelo: see this be done, and sent
according to command; whiles I
persuade this rude wretch willingly
to die.

PROVOST
This shall be done, good father,
presently. But Barnardine must die
this afternoon: and how shall we
continue Claudio, to save me from
the danger that might come if he
were known alive?

DUKE VINCENTIO
Let this be done. Put them in
secret holds, both Barnardine and
Claudio: 'ere twice the sun hath
made his journal greeting to the
under generation, you shall find
your safety manifested. Quick,
dispatch, and send the head to
Angelo.

PROVOST
I'll carry it myself.

DUKE VINCENTIO
Make a swift return; for I would
commune with you of such things
that want no ear but yours.

PROVOST
I'll make all speed.

EXT. NUNNERY - MORNING

The sun rises over the city.

DUKE VINCENTIO
Good morning to you, fair and
gracious daughter.

ISABELLA
The better, given me by so holy a
man. Hath yet the deputy sent my
brother's pardon?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ISABELLA

Nay, but it is not so.

DUKE VINCENTIO

It is no other: show your wisdom,
daughter, in your close patience.

ISABELLA

O, I will to him and pluck out his
eyes!

DUKE VINCENTIO

You shall not be admitted to his
sight.

ISABELLA

Unhappy Claudio! Wretched Isabel!
Injurious world! Most damned
Angelo!

DUKE VINCENTIO

This nor hurts him nor profits you
a jot; forbear it therefore; give
your cause to heaven. Mark what I
say, which you shall find by every
syllable a faithful verity: the
Duke comes home tomorrow; nay, dry
your eyes; one of our convent, and
his confessor, gives me this
instance: already he hath carried
notice to Escalus and Angelo, who
do prepare to meet him at the
gates, there to give up their
power. If you can, pace your wisdom
in that good path that I would wish
it go, and you shall have your
bosom on this wretch, grace of the
Duke, revenges to your heart, and
general honour.

ISABELLA

I am directed by you.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Who's here?

Lucio staggers along the path towards them, still drunk.

LUCIO

Good morn, Friar. O pretty
Isabella, I am pale at mine heart
to see thine eyes so red: thou must
be patient.

(MORE)

LUCIO (CONT'D)

I am fain to dine and sup with
water and bran; I dare not for my
head fill my belly; one fruitful
meal would set me to 't. But they
say the Duke will be here tomorrow.
By my troth, Isabel, I loved thy
brother: if the old fantastical
Duke of dark corners had been at
home, he had lived.

Distraught, Isabella hurries away.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Did you such a thing?

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

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

INT. DUKE'S PALACE - DAY

Escalus tries to calm a furious Angelo, who's reading messages on a tablet.

ESCALUS

Every letter he hath writ hath
disvouched other.

ANGELO

In most uneven and distracted
manner. His actions show much like
to madness: pray heaven his wisdom
be not tainted! And why meet him at
the gates, and redeliver our
authorities there?

ESCALUS

I guess not.

ANGELO

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

ESCALUS

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

ANGELO

Well, I beseech you, let it be
proclaimed betimes i' the morn;
I'll call you at your house: give
notice to such men of sort and suit
as are to meet him.

ESCALUS

I shall, sir. Fare you well.

ANGELO

Good night.

Escalus leaves. Angelo becomes reflective.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

This deed unshapes me quite, makes
me unpregnant and dull to all
proceedings. A deflower'd maid! And
by an eminent body that enforced
the law against it! But that her
tender shame will not proclaim
against her maiden loss, how might
she tongue me!

(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Yet reason dares her no; for my
authority bears of a credent bulk,
that no particular scandal once can
touch but it confounds the
breather. He should have lived,
save that riotous youth, with
dangerous sense, might in the times
to come have ta'en revenge, by so
receiving a dishonour'd life with
ransom of such shame. Would yet he
had lived! A lack, when once our
grace we have forgot, nothing goes
right: we would, and we would not.

Angelo stares out at the setting sun, blood red in the
Martian sky.

INT. SPACEPORT - DAY

Isabella and Mariana lurk at the entrance to the Spaceport.

ISABELLA

To speak so indirectly I am loath:
I would say the truth; but to
accuse him so, that is your part:
yet I am advised to do it; he says,
to veil full purpose.

MARIANA

Be ruled by him.

ISABELLA

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

MARIANA

I would Friar Lodowick --

ISABELLA

O, peace! The friar is come!

A hooded monk approaches. He pulls down his hood to greet
them. It's not the Duke, but Friar Peter.

FRIAR PETER

Come, I have found you out a stand
most fit, where you may have such
vantage on the Duke, he shall not
pass you. Twice have the trumpets
sounded; the generous and gravest
citizens have hent the gates, and
very near upon the Duke is
entering: therefore, hence, away!

He leads them away.

ACT V

INT. SPACEPORT HANGAR - DAY

In a huge hangar, Angelo, Escalus, the Provost, Elbow and various guards and officers await the Duke.

The hangar doors swing open and the Duke's ship swoops in.

The clothes and hair of the assembled dignitaries are blown about by the gale from the ship.

The ship settles down and a gangway slides out.

Angelo and Escalus look on.

The Duke strolls down the gangway.

Angelo and Escalus step forward to greet him.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ANGELO, ESCALUS

Happy return be to your royal
grace!

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ANGELO

You make my bonds still greater.

DUKE VINCENTIO

O, your desert speaks loud; and I
should wrong it, to lock it in the
wards of covert bosom, when it
deserves, with characters of brass,
a fortified residence 'gainst the
tooth of time and razure of
oblivion.

The Duke starts to walk, Escalus and Angelo follow.

INT. SPACEPORT ARRIVALS HALL - DAY

Isabella and Mariana stand waiting with Friar Peter.

The Duke leads his welcoming party through the doors.

FRIAR PETER

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

Friar Peter pushes Isabella forward.

Isabella kneels before the Duke.

ISABELLA

Justice, O royal Duke! Vail your
regard upon a wrong'd, I would fain
have said, a maid! O worthy prince,
dishonour not your eye by throwing
it on any other object till you
have heard me in my true complaint
and given me justice, justice,
justice, justice!

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ISABELLA

O worthy Duke, you bid me seek
redemption of the devil: hear me
yourself; for that which I must
speak must either punish me, not
being believed, or wring redress
from you. Hear me, O hear me, here!

As they speak, a crowd of people starts to form around them.

ANGELO

My lord, her wits, I fear me, are
not firm: she hath been a suitor to
me for her brother cut off by
course of justice,--

ISABELLA

By course of justice!

ANGELO

And she will speak most bitterly
and strange.

ISABELLA

Most strange, but yet most truly,
will I speak: that Angelo's
forsworn; is it not strange? That
Angelo's a murderer; is 't not
strange? That Angelo is an
adulterous thief, an hypocrite, a
virgin-violator; is it not strange
and strange?

DUKE VINCENTIO

Nay, it is ten times strange.

ISABELLA

It is not truer he is Angelo than
this is all as true as it is
strange: nay, it is ten times true;
for truth is truth to the end of
reckoning.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Away with her! Poor soul, she
speaks this in the infirmity of
sense.

ISABELLA

O prince, I conjure thee, as thou
believest there is another comfort
than this world, that thou neglect
me not, with that opinion that I am
touch'd with madness! Make not
impossible that which but seems
unlike: 'tis not impossible but
one, the wicked'st caitiff on the
ground, may seem as shy, as grave,
as just, as absolute as Angelo;
even so may Angelo, in all his
dressings, characts, titles, forms,
be an arch-villain; believe it,
royal prince: if he be less, he's
nothing; but he's more, had I more
name for badness.

DUKE VINCENTIO

By mine honesty, if she be mad, --
as I believe no other, -- her
madness hath the oddest frame of
sense, such a dependency of thing
on thing, as e'er I heard in
madness.

ISABELLA

O gracious Duke, harp not on that,
nor do not banish reason for
inequality; but let your reason
serve to make the truth appear
where it seems hid, and hide the
false seems true.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ISABELLA

I am the sister of one Claudio,
condemn'd upon the act of
fornication to lose his head;

(MORE)

ISABELLA (CONT'D)
condemn'd by Angelo: I, in
probation of a sisterhood, was sent
to by my brother; one Lucio as then
the messenger,--

Lucio steps forward out of the crowd.

LUCIO
That's I, an't like your grace:
I came to her from Claudio, and
desired her to try her gracious
fortune with Lord Angelo for her
poor brother's pardon.

DUKE VINCENTIO
You were not bid to speak.

LUCIO
No, my good lord; nor wish'd to
hold my peace.

DUKE VINCENTIO
I wish you now, then; pray you,
take note of it: and when you have
a business for yourself, pray
heaven you then be perfect.

LUCIO
I warrant your honour.

DUKE VINCENTIO
The warrants for yourself; take
heed to't.

ISABELLA
This gentleman told somewhat of my
tale, --

LUCIO
Right.

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

ISABELLA
I went to this pernicious caitiff
deputy, --

DUKE VINCENTIO
That's somewhat madly spoken.

ISABELLA
Pardon it; the phrase is to the
matter.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Mended again. The matter; proceed.

ISABELLA

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

This is most likely!

ISABELLA

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

By heaven, fond wretch, thou knowist not what thou speak'st, or else thou art suborn'd against his honour in hateful practise. First, his integrity stands without blemish. Next, it imports no reason that with such vehemency he should pursue faults proper to himself: if he had so offended, he would have weigh'd thy brother by himself and not have cut him off. Some one hath set you on: confess the truth, and say by whose advice thou camest here to complain.

ISABELLA

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

I know you'd fain be gone. An officer to prison with her!

(MORE)

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

Shall we thus permit a blasting and a scandalous breath to fall on him so near us? This needs must be a practise. Who knew of your intent and coming hither?

ISABELLA

One that I would were here, Friar Lodowick.

With a dismissive flick of the Dukes hand, Elbow leads Isabella away.

DUKE VINCENTIO

A ghostly father, belike. Who knows that Lodowick?

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Words against me? This is a good friar, belike! And to set on this wretched woman here against our substitute! Let this friar be found.

LUCIO

But yesternight, my lord, she and that friar, I saw them: a saucy friar, a very scurvy fellow.

FRIAR PETER

Blessed be your royal grace! I have stood by, my lord, and I have heard your royal ear abused. First, hath this woman most wrongfully accused your substitute, who is as free from touch or soil with her as she from one ungot.

DUKE VINCENTIO

We did believe no less. Know you that Friar Lodowick that she speaks of?

FRIAR PETER

I know him for a man divine and holy; not scurvy, nor a temporary meddler, as he's reported by this gentleman; and, on my trust, a man that never yet did, as he vouches, misreport your grace.

LUCIO

My lord, most villanously; believe it.

FRIAR PETER

Well, he in time may come to clear himself; but at this instant he is sick my lord, of a strange fever. Upon his mere request, being come to knowledge that there was complaint intended 'gainst Lord Angelo, came I hither, to speak, as from his mouth, what he doth know is true and false; and what he with his oath and all probation will make up full clear, whensoever he's convented. First, for this woman. To justify this worthy nobleman, so vulgarly and personally accused, her shall you hear disproved to her eyes, till she herself confess it.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Good friar, let's hear it.

Mariana steps forward.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

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.

They are passed some seats to sit on.

MARIANA

Pardon, my lord; I will not show my face until my husband bid me.

DUKE VINCENTIO

What, are you married?

MARIANA

No, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Are you a maid?

MARIANA

No, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

A widow, then?

MARIANA

Neither, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Why, you are nothing then: neither
maid, widow, nor wife?

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

MARIANA

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

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

For the benefit of silence, would
thou wert so too! This is no
witness for Lord Angelo.

MARIANA

Now I come to't my lord, she that
accuses him of fornication, in self-
same manner doth accuse my husband,
and charges him my lord, with such
a time when I'll depose I had him
in mine arms with all the effect of
love.

ANGELO

Charges she more than me?

MARIANA

Not that I know.

DUKE VINCENTIO

No? You say your husband.

MARIANA

Why, just, my lord, and that is
Angelo, who thinks he knows that he
ne'er knew my body, but knows he
thinks that he knows Isabel's.

ANGELO

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

MARIANA

My husband bids me; now I will
unmask.

She raises her veil.

MARIANA (CONT'D)

This is that face, thou cruel
Angelo, which once thou swore'st was
worth the looking on; this is the
hand which, with a vow'd contract,
was fast belock'd in thine; this is
the body that took away the match
from Isabel, and did supply thee at
thy garden-house in her imagined
person.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Know you this woman?

LUCIO

Carnally, she says.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Sirrah, no more!

ANGELO

My lord, I must confess I know this
woman: and five years since there
was some speech of marriage betwixt
myself and her; which was broke
off, partly for that her promised
proportions came short of
composition, but in chief for that
her reputation was disvalued in
levity: since which time of five
years I never spake with her, saw
her, nor heard from her, upon my
faith and honour.

MARIANA

Noble prince, as there comes light
from heaven and words from breath,
as there is sense in truth and
truth in virtue, I am affianced
this man's wife as strongly as
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 confixed here, a
marble monument!

ANGELO

I did but smile till now: now, good my lord, give me the scope of justice my patience here is touch'd. I do perceive these poor informal women are no more but instruments of some more mightier member that sets them on: let me have way, my lord, to find this practise out.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Ay, with my heart, and punish them to your height of pleasure. Thou foolish friar, and thou pernicious woman, compact with her that's gone, think'st thou thy oaths, though they would swear down each particular saint, were testimonies against his worth and credit that's seal'd in approbation? You, Lord Escalus, sit with my cousin; lend him your kind pains to find out this abuse, whence 'tis derived. There is another friar that set them on; let him be sent for.

FRIAR PETER

Would he were here, my lord! For he indeed hath set the women on to this complaint: your provost knows the place where he abides and he may fetch him.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Go do it instantly.

The Provost bows and leaves.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

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.

The Duke hurries away through the crowd.

ESCALUS

My lord, we'll do it throughly. Call that same Isabel here once again; I would speak with her.

An Officer turns away and talks into a radio in his lapel.

ESCALUS (CONT'D)

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.

Elbow leads Isabella back.

ESCALUS

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

LUCIO

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

The Provost leads the Duke in his friar's habit.

ESCALUS

In very good time: speak not you to him till we call upon you.

LUCIO

Mum.

ESCALUS

Come, sir: did you set these women on to slander Lord Angelo? They have confessed you did.

DUKE VINCENTIO

'Tis false.

ESCALUS

How! Know you where you are?

DUKE VINCENTIO

Where is the Duke? 'Tis he should
hear me speak.

ESCALUS

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Is the Duke gone? Then is your
cause gone too. The Duke's unjust,
thus to retort your manifest
appeal, and put your trial in the
villain's mouth which here you come
to accuse.

ESCALUS

Why, thou unreverend and unhallow'd
friar, is't not enough thou hast
suborn'd these women to accuse this
worthy man, but, in foul mouth and
in the witness of his proper ear,
to call him villain? And then to
glance from him to the Duke
himself, to tax him with injustice?
Take him hence; to the rack with
him! We'll touse you joint by
joint, but we will know his
purpose. What 'unjust'!

DUKE VINCENTIO

Be not so hot; the Duke dare no
more stretch this finger of mine
than he dare rack his own: his
subject am I not, nor here
provincial. My business in this
state made me a looker on here in
Vienna, where I have seen
corruption boil and bubble till it
o'er-run the stew!

ESCALUS

Slander to the state! Away with him
to prison!

ANGELO

What can you vouch against him,
Signior Lucio? Is this the man that
you did tell us of?

LUCIO

'Tis he, my lord. Come hither,
goodman baldpate: do you know me?

DUKE VINCENTIO

I remember you, sir, by the sound
of your voice.

LUCIO

And do you remember what you said
of the Duke?

DUKE VINCENTIO

Most notedly, sir.

LUCIO

Do you so, sir? And was the Duke a
fleshmonger, a fool, and a coward,
as you then reported him to be?

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

LUCIO

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

The crowd are on Lucio's side, cheering him along.

DUKE VINCENTIO

I protest I love the Duke as I love
myself.

ANGELO

Hark, how the villain would close
now, after his treasonable abuses!

ESCALUS

Such a fellow is not to be talked
withal. Away with him to prison!
Where is the Provost? Away with him
to prison! Lay bolts enough upon
him: let him speak no more. Away
with those giglots too, and with
the other confederate companion!

DUKE VINCENTIO

(To Provost)

Stay, sir; stay awhile.

ANGELO

What, resists he? Help him, Lucio.

LUCIO

Come, sir; come, sir; come, sir;
foh, sir! Why, you bald-pated,
lying rascal, you must be hooded,
must you? Show your knave's visage,
with a pox to you! Show your sheep-
biting face, and be hanged an hour!
Will't not off?

He pulls off the monk's hood, and discovers the Duke.

The crowd, gasp and fall silent.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Thou art the first knave that e'er
madest a Duke. First, Provost, let
me bail these gentle three.

Lucio tries to sneak away.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

Sneak not away, sir; for the friar
and you must have a word anon. Lay
hold on him.

Guards grab Lucio.

LUCIO

This may prove worse than hanging.

DUKE VINCENTIO

(To ESCALUS)

What you have spoke I pardon: sit
you down: we'll borrow place of
him.

(To ANGELO)

Sir, by your leave.

He takes Angelo's seat.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

(Still to Angelo)

Hast thou or word, or wit, or
impudence, that yet can do thee
office? If thou hast, rely upon it
till my tale be heard, and hold no
longer out.

ANGELO

O my dread lord, I should be
guiltier than my guiltiness, to
think I can be undiscernible, when
I perceive your grace, like power
divine, hath look'd upon my passes.
Then, good prince, no longer
session hold upon my shame, but let
my trial be mine own confession:
Immediate sentence then and sequent
death is all the grace I beg.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

ANGELO

I was, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Go take her hence, and marry her
instantly.

(to Friar Peter)

Do you the office, friar; which
consummate, return him here again.
Go with him, Provost.

The Provost leads Angelo, Mariana and the Friar away.

ESCALUS

My lord, I am more amazed at his
dishonour than at the strangeness
of it.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Come hither, Isabel. Your friar is
now your prince: as I was then
advertising and holy to your
business, not changing heart with
habit, I am still attorney'd at
your service.

ISABELLA

O, give me pardon, that I, your
vassal, have employ'd and pain'd
your unknown sovereignty!

DUKE VINCENTIO

You are pardon'd, Isabel: and now,
dear maid, be you as free to us.
Your brother's death, I know, sits
at your heart; and you may marvel
why I obscured myself, labouring to
save his life, and would not rather
make rash remonstrance of my hidden
power than let him so be lost. O
most kind maid, it was the swift
celerity of his death, which I did
think with slower foot came on,
that brain'd my purpose. But, peace
be with him! That life is better
life, past fearing death, than that
which lives to fear: make it your
comfort, so happy is your brother.

ISABELLA

I do, my lord.

The Provost leads the wedding party back into the arrivals
area.

DUKE VINCENTIO

For this new-married man
approaching here, whose salt
imagination yet hath wrong'd your
well defended honour, you must
pardon for Mariana's sake: but as
he adjudged your brother, -- being
criminal, in double violation of
sacred chastity and of promise -
breach thereon dependent, for your
brother's life, -- the very mercy
of the law cries out most audible,
even from his proper tongue, 'An
Angelo for Claudio, death for
death!' Haste still pays haste, and
leisure answers leisure; Like doth
quit like, and measure still for
measure. Then, Angelo, thy fault's
thus manifested; which, though thou
wouldst deny, denies thee vantage.
We do condemn thee to the very
block where Claudio stoop'd to
death, and with like haste. Away
with him!

MARIANA

O my most gracious lord, I hope you
will not mock me with a husband.

DUKE VINCENTIO

It is your husband mock'd you with
a husband. Consenting to the
safeguard of your honour, I thought
your marriage fit; else imputation,
for that he knew you, might
reproach your life and choke your
good to come; for his possessions,
although by confiscation they are
ours, we do instate and widow you
withal, to buy you a better
husband.

MARIANA

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Never crave him; we are definitive.

MARIANA

Gentle my liege,--

Mariana kneels before him.

DUKE VINCENTIO

You do but lose your labour. Away
with him to death!

(MORE)

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

(To Lucio)

Now, sir, to you.

MARIANA

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Against all sense you do importune her: should she kneel down in mercy of this fact, her brother's ghost his paved bed would break, and take her hence in horror.

MARIANA

Isabel, sweet Isabel, do yet but kneel by me; hold up your hands, say nothing; I'll speak all. O Isabel, will you not lend a knee?

DUKE VINCENTIO

He dies for Claudio's death.

ISABELLA

Most bounteous sir,
(Kneeling next to Mariana)
Look, if it please you, on this man condemn'd, as if my brother lived: I partly think a due sincerity govern'd his deeds, till he did look on me: since it is so, let him not die. My brother had but justice, in that he did the thing for which he died: For Angelo, his act did not o'ertake his bad intent, and must be buried but as an intent that perish'd by the way: thoughts are no subjects; intents but merely thoughts.

MARIANA

Merely, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

PROVOST

It was commanded so.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Had you a special warrant for the deed?

PROVOST

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

PROVOST

Pardon me, noble lord: I thought it was a fault, but knew it not; yet did repent me, after more advice; for testimony whereof, one in the prison, that should by private order else have died, I have reserved alive.

DUKE VINCENTIO

What's he?

PROVOST

His name is Barnardine.

DUKE VINCENTIO

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

The Provost hurries away making calls on his radio.

ESCALUS

I am sorry, one so learned and so wise as you, Lord Angelo, have still appear'd, should slip so grossly, both in the heat of blood. and lack of temper'd judgment afterward.

ANGELO

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

The Provost returns with Claudio and Barnardine, both are hooded.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Which is that Barnardine?

PROVOST

This, my lord.

DUKE VINCENTIO

There was a friar told me of this man.

(MORE)

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

Sirrah, thou art said to have a stubborn soul. That apprehends no further than this world, and squarest thy life according. Thou'rt condemn'd: but, for those earthly faults, I quit them all; and pray thee take this mercy to provide for better times to come. Friar, advise him; I leave him to your hand. What muffled fellow's that?

PROVOST

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

The Provost unmuffles Claudio. Isabella gasps and rushes forward to hug him.

DUKE VINCENTIO

(To Isabella)

If he be like your brother, for his sake is he pardon'd. By this Lord Angelo perceives he's safe; methinks I see a quickening in his eye. Well, Angelo, your evil quits you well: look that you love your wife; her worth worth yours. I find an apt remission in myself; and yet here's one in place I cannot pardon.

(To Lucio)

You, sirrah, that knew me for a fool, a coward, one all of luxury, an ass, a madman; wherein have I so deserved of you, what you extol me thus?

LUCIO

'Faith, my lord. I spoke it but according to the trick. If you will hang me for it, you may; but I had rather it would please you I might be whipt.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Whipt first, sir, and hanged after.

Proclaim it, Provost, round about the city. Is any woman wrong'd by this lewd fellow, as I have heard him swear himself there's one whom he begot with child, let her appear, and he shall marry her: the nuptial finish'd, let him be whipt and hang'd.

LUCIO

I beseech your highness, do not marry me to a whore. Your highness said even now, I made you a Duke: good my lord, do not recompense me in making me a cuckold.

DUKE VINCENTIO

Upon mine honour, thou shalt marry her. Thy slanders I forgive; and therewithal remit thy other forfeits. Take him to prison; and see our pleasure herein executed.

LUCIO

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

DUKE VINCENTIO

Slandering a prince deserves it.

Elbow and his Officers drag Lucio away.

The Duke nods to Juliet, who steps forward and shows Claudio their baby.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

She, Claudio, that you wrong'd, look you restore. Joy to you, Mariana! Love her, Angelo: I have confess'd her and I know her virtue. Thanks, good friend Escalus, for thy much goodness: there's more behind that is more grate. Thanks, Provost, for thy care and secrecy: We shall employ thee in a worthier place. Forgive him, Angelo, that brought you home the head of Ragozine for Claudio's: the offence pardons itself. Dear Isabel, I have a motion much imports your good; whereto if you'll a willing ear incline, what's mine is yours and what is yours is mine.

Isabella pauses for a moment. She glances across at Angelo, then back at the Duke.

The Duke motions that everything, the people, the city are hers.

Isabella stands there impassive. She neither smiles nor frowns.

The crowd watches on intently.

Isabella's eyes flick to Angelo.

Angelo and Mariana look on, one willing her to say no, the other yes.

Isabella looks back at the Duke.

The Duke holds out his hand, but is beginning to get uncomfortable.

Isabella holds his stare, impassive.

The Duke lowers his hand, realising that he is not going to get an answer.

He turns to Escalus.

DUKE VINCENTIO (CONT'D)

So, bring us to our palace; where
we'll show what's yet behind,
that's meet you all should know.

The Duke and his entourage sweep from the building.

Isabella remains standing alone in the arrivals hall as normality returns.