MEASURE FOR MEASURE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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MEASURE FOR MEASURE
William Shakespeare

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Published in 2024

© **Published by**



Qurate Books Pvt. Ltd.
Goa 403523, India
www.quratebooks.com
Tel: 1800-210-6527, Email: info@quratebooks.com

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ISBN: 978-81-19263-44-8

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THE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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VOLUME I.

Cambridge and London:
MACMILLAN AND CO. 1863.

Dramatis Personæ

Act I Scene 1 An apartment in the Duke's palace.
Scene 2 A street.
Scene 3 A monastery.
Scene 4 A nunnery.

Act II Scene 1 A hall in Angelo's house.
Scene 2 Another room in the same.
Scene 3 A room in a prison.
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Act III Scene 1 A room in the prison.
Scene 2 The street before the prison.

Act IV Scene 1 The moated grange at St Luke's.
Scene 2 A room in the prison.
Scene 3 Another room in the same.
Scene 4 A room in Angelo's house.

Scene 5 Fields without the town.
Scene 6 Street near the city-gate.

Act V Scene 1 The city-gate.

Dramatis Personæ

VINCENTIO, the DUKE.
ANGELO, Deputy.
ESCALUS, an ancient Lord.
CLAUDIO, a young gentleman.
LUCIO, a fantastic.
Two other gentlemen.
PROVOST.
THOMAS, two friars.
PETER, A Justice2.
VARRIUS2.
ELBOW, a simple constable.
FROTH, a foolish gentleman.
POMPEY, Servant to Mistress Overdone3.
ABHORSON, an executioner.
BARNARDINE, a dissolute prisoner.
ISABELLA, sister to Claudio.
MARIANA, betrothed to ANGELO.
JULIET, beloved of Claudio.
FRANCISCA, a nun.
MISTRESS OVERDONE, a bawd.
Lords, Officers, Citizens, Boy, and Attendants2.

SCENE—Vienna

1. DRAMATIS PERSONÆ] THE NAMES OF ALL THE ACTORS Ff (added at the end of the play).
2. Omitted in Ff.
3. Clowne. Ff.

ACT I

I. 1 SCENE I
An apartment in the Duke's palace

Enter DUKE, ESCALUS, LORDS and Attendants.

DUKE.

ESCALUS. My lord.

DUKE. Of government the properties to unfold,
Would seem in me to affect speech and discourse;
Since I am put to know that your own science
Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice
My strength can give you: then no more remains,
But that to your sufficiency . . . . . .
. . . . . as your worth is able,
And let them work. The nature of our people,

Our city's institutions, and the terms
For common Justice, you're as pregnant in
As art and practice hath enriched any
That we remember. There is our commission,
From which we would not have you warp. Call hither,
I say, bid come before us Angelo.

Exit an Attendant.

What figure of us think you he will bear?
For you must know, we have with special soul
Elected him our absence to supply;
Lent him our terror, dress'd him with our love,
And given his deputation all the organs
Of our own power: what think you of it?

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

I. 1.

DUKE. Look where he comes.

Enter ANGELO.

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

DUKE. Angelo,
There is a kind of character in thy life,
That to th' observer doth thy history
Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper, as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
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. Spirits are not finely touch'd
But to fine issues; nor Nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence,
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines

Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use. But I do bend my speech
To one that can my part in him advertise;
Hold therefore, Angelo:—
In our remove be thou at full ourself;
Mortality and mercy in Vienna
Live in thy tongue and heart: old Escalus,

Though first in question, is thy secondary.
Take thy commission.

ANGELO. Now, good my lord,
Let there be some more test made of my metal,

I. 1.

Before so noble and so great a figure
Be stamp'd upon it.

DUKE. No more evasion:
We have with a leaven'd and prepared choice
Proceeded to you; therefore take your honours.
Our haste from hence is of so quick condition,
That it prefers itself, and leaves unquestion'd
Matters of needful value. 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.

ANGELO. Yet, give leave, my lord,
That we may bring you something on the way.

DUKE. My haste may not admit it;
Nor need you, on mine honour, have to do
With any scruple; your scope is as mine own,
So to enforce or qualify the laws

As to your soul seems good. Give me your hand:
I'll privily away. I love the people,
But do not like to stage me to their eyes:
Though it do well, I do not relish well
Their loud applause and Aves vehement;
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
That does affect it. Once more, fare you well.

ANGELO. The heavens give safety to your purposes!

I. 1.
75
ESCALUS. Lead FORTH and bring you back in happiness!

DUKE. I thank you. Fare you well. Exit.

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

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

ESCALUS. I'll wait upon your honour.

Exeunt.

I. 2 SCENE II
A street

Enter LUCIO and two Gentlemen.

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

FIRST GENT. Heaven grant us its peace, but not the 5 King of Hungary's!

SEC. GENT. Amen.

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

10 SEC. GENT. 'Thou shalt not steal'?

LUCIO. Ay, that he razed.

FIRST GENT. Why, 'twas a commandment to command the captain and all the rest from their functions: they put FORTH to steal. There's not a soldier of us all, that, in the 15 thanksgiving before meat, do relish the petition well that prays for peace.

SEC. GENT. I never heard any soldier dislike it.

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

20 SEC. GENT. No? a dozen times at least.

FIRST GENT. What, in metre?

LUCIO. In any proportion or in any Language.

FIRST GENT. I think, or in any religion.

LUCIO. Ay, why not? Grace is grace, despite of all

I. 2.

25 controversy: as, for example, thou thyself art a wicked villain, despite of all grace.

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

LUCIO. I grant; as there may between the lists and the 30 velvet. Thou art the list.

FIRST GENT. And thou the velvet: thou art good velvet; thou'rt a three-piled piece, I warrant thee: I had as lief be a list of an English kersey, as be piled, as thou art piled, for a French velvet. Do I speak feelingly now?

LUCIO. I think thou dost; and, indeed, with most painful feeling of thy speech: I will, out of thine own confession, learn to begin thy health; but, whilst I live, forget to drink after thee.

FIRST GENT. I think I have done myself wrong, have 40 I not?

SEC. GENT. Yes, that thou hast, whether thou art tainted or free.

LUCIO. Behold, behold, where Madam Mitigation comes! I have purchased as many diseases under her roof 45 as come to—

SEC. GENT. To what, I pray?

LUCIO. Judge.

SEC. GENT. To three thousand dolours a year.

FIRST GENT. Ay, and more.

I. 2.

LUCIO. A French crown more.

FIRST GENT. Thou art always figuring diseases in me; but thou art full of error; I am sound.

LUCIO. Nay, not as one would say, healthy; but so sound as things that are hollow: thy bones are hollow; 55 impiety has made a feast of thee.

Enter MISTRESS OVERDONE.

FIRST GENT. How now! which of your hips has the most profound sciatica?

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

60 SEC. GENT. Who's that, I pray thee?

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

FIRST GENT. Claudio to prison? 'tis not so.

MRS OV. Nay, but I know 'tis so: I saw him arrested; saw him carried away; and, which is more, within these 65 three days his head to be chopped off.

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

MRS OV. I am too sure of it: and it is for getting
Madam Julietta with child.

70
LUCIO. Believe me, this may be: he promised to meet me two hours since, and he was ever precise in promise-keeping.

SEC. GENT. Besides, you know, it draws something near to the speech we had to such a purpose.

I. 2.
75 FIRST GENT. But, most of all, agreeing with the proclamation.

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

Exeunt LUCIO and Gentlemen.

MRS. OV. Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat, what with the gallows, and what with poverty, I am 80 custom-shrunk.

Enter

POMPEY. How now! what's the news with you?

POMPEY. Yonder man is carried to prison.

MRS. OV Well; what has he done?

POMPEY. A woman.

MRS. OV But what's his offence?

POMPEY. Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.

MRS. OV What, is there a maid with child by him?

POMPEY. No, but there's a woman with maid by him.
You have not heard of the proclamation, have you?

MRS. OV What proclamation, man?

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

MRS OV 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.

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

POMPEY. To the ground, mistress.

MRS. OV Why, here's a Change indeed in the commonwealth! I. 2.
What shall become of me?

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

MRS. OV What's to do here, Thomas tapster? let's withdraw.