

Measure for Measure

4.3

Enter Pompey

POMPEY I am as well acquainted here as I was in our house of profession. One would think it were Mistress Overdone's own house, for here be many of her old customers. First, here's young Master Rash; he's in for a commodity of brown paper and old ginger, nine score and seventeen pounds, of which he made five marks ready money. Marry, then ginger was not much in request, for the old women were all dead. Then is there here one Master Caper, at the suit of Master Threepile the mercer, for some four suits of peach-coloured satin, which now peaches him a beggar. Then have we here young Dizzy, and young Master Deepvow, and Master Copperspur and Master Starve-lackey the rapier and dagger man, and young Drop-hair that killed lusty Pudding, and Master Forthright the tilter, and brave Master Shoe-tie the great traveller, and wild Half-can that stabbed Pots, and I think forty more, all great doers in our trade, and are now `for the Lord's sake'.

Enter Abhorson

ABHORSON Sirrah, bring Barnardine hither.

POMPEY Master Barnardine! You must rise and be hanged, Master Barnardine! 20

ABHORSON What ho, Barnardine!

BARNARDINE (*within*) A pox o' your throats! Who makes that noise there? What are you?

POMPEY Your friends, sir; the hangman. You must be so good, sir, to rise and be put to death. 25

BARNARDINE 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. 30

ABHORSON Go in to him and fetch him out.

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

ABHORSON Is the axe upon the block, sirrah?

POMPEY Very ready, sir.

35

Enter Barnardine

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

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

BARNARDINE You rogue, I have been drinking all night. I 40
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.

Enter the Duke, disguised as a friar

ABHORSON (to Barnardine) Look you, sir, here comes your 45
ghostly father. Do we jest now, think you?

DUKE (to Barnardine) 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 50
night, and I will have more time to prepare me, or
they shall beat out my brains with billets. I will not
consent to die this day, that's certain.

DUKE

O sir, you must; and therefore, I beseech you,
Look forward on the journey you shall go. 55

BARNARDINE I swear I will not die today, for any man's
persuasion.

DUKE But hear you±±

BARNARDINE Not a word. If you have anything to say to
me, come to my ward, for thence will not I today. 60

Exit

DUKE

Unfit to live or die. O gravel heart!
After him, fellows; bring him to the block.

Exeunt Abhorson and Pompey

Enter Provost

PROVOST

Now, sir, how do you find the prisoner?

DUKE

A creature unprepared, unmeet for death;
And to transport him in the mind he is

65

Were damnable.

PROVOST Here in the prison, father,
There died this morning of a cruel fever
One Ragusine, a most notorious pirate,
A man of Claudio's years, his beard and head
Just of his colour. What if we do omit 70
This reprobate till he were well inclined,
And satisfy the deputy with the visage
Of Ragusine, more like to Claudio?

DUKE
O, 'tis an accident that heaven provides.
Dispatch it presently; the hour draws on 75
Prefixed 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; 80
And how shall we continue Claudio,
To save me from the danger that might come
If he were known alive?

DUKE Let this be done:
Put them in secret holds, both Barnardine and Claudio.
Ere twice the sun hath made his journal greeting 85
To yonder generation, you shall find
Your safety manifested.

PROVOST I am your free dependant.

DUKE
Quick, dispatch, and send the head to Angelo.
Exit Provost
Now will I write letters to Angelo±±
The Provost, he shall bear them±±whose contents 90
Shall witness to him I am near at home,
And that by great injunctions I am bound
To enter publicly. Him I'll desire
To meet me at the consecrated fount
A league below the city, and from thence, 95
By cold gradation and well-balanced form,
We shall proceed with Angelo.

Enter the Provost, with Ragusine's head

PROVOST

Here is the head; I'll carry it myself.

DUKE

Convenient is it. Make a swift return,
For I would commune with you of such things 100
That want no ear but yours.

PROVOST I'll make all speed.

Exit

ISABELLA (*within*) Peace, ho, be here!

DUKE

The tongue of Isabel. She's come to know
If yet her brother's pardon be come hither; 105
But I will keep her ignorant of her good,
To make her heavenly comforts of despair
When it is least expected.

ISABELLA [*within*] Ho, by your leave!

[*Enter Isabella*]

DUKE

Good morning to you, fair and gracious daughter.

ISABELLA

The better, given me by so holy a man. 110
Hath yet the deputy sent my brother's pardon?

DUKE

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

ISABELLA

Nay, but it is not so.

DUKE

It is no other.

Show your wisdom, daughter, in your close patience. 115

ISABELLA

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

DUKE

You shall not be admitted to his sight.

ISABELLA (*weeping*)

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

DUKE

This nor hurts him, nor profits you a jot. 120
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, 125
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, 130
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

This letter, then, to Friar Peter give.
'Tis that he sent me of the Duke's return. 135
Say by this token I desire his company
At Mariana's house tonight. Her cause and yours
I'll perfect him withal, and he shall bring you
Before the Duke, and to the head of Angelo
Accuse him home and home. For my poor self, 140
I am combineÁd by a sacred vow,
And shall be absent. (*Giving the letter*) Wend you with
this letter.

Command these fretting waters from your eyes
With a light heart. Trust not my holy order
If I pervert your course.

Enter Lucio

Who's here?
Good even.

LUCIO

145

Friar, where's the Provost?

DUKE

Not within, sir.

LUCIO O pretty Isabella, I am pale at mine heart to see
thine eyes so red. Thou must be patient. 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. 150
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.

[Exit Isabella]

DUKE Sir, the Duke is marvellous little beholden to your reports; but the best is, he lives not in them. 155

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

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

LUCIO Nay, tarry, I'll go along with thee. I can tell thee pretty tales of the Duke. 160

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

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

DUKE Did you such a thing? 165

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

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

LUCIO By my troth, I'll go with thee to the lane's end. If 170
bawdy talk offend you, we'll have very little of it. Nay,
friar, I am a kind of burr; I shall stick.

Exeunt