

**FEMALE ENSEMBLE (LADY), MALE ENSEMBLE (GENTLEMAN),
MISTRESS OVERDONE, POMPEY**

50 ANGELO Now, good my lord,
Let there be some more test made of my mettle,
Before so noble and so great a figure
Be stamped upon it.

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

*Angelo takes
paper*

65 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,
70 So to enforce or qualify the laws
As to your soul seems good. Once more, fare well.

Offers hand

46 Mortality (power to impose) the death penalty 48 first in question first under consideration/senior secondary deputy 51 mettle character/spirit; puns on "metal" (of a coin) 52 figure image 55 leavened carefully considered/matured (like dough left to rise) 57 quick condition urgent a nature 58 prefers itself takes precedence unquestioned unexamined 59 needful value necessary importance 60 concernings affairs importune urge 61 look expect 63 th'hopeful the promising 65 leave permission 66 bring you something accompany you a little 67 admit allow 68 have . . . scruple concern yourself with any doubt 70 qualify moderate 72 privily secretly 73 stage me publicly display myself 74 do well is fitting/politically appropriate/pleasing to the crowd

ANGELO The heavens give safety to your purposes!
ESCALUS Lead forth and bring you back in happiness!

80 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.
A power I have, but of what strength and nature
85 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*

Act 1 Scene 2

running scene 2

Enter Lucio, a Lady, and a Gentleman

START

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.

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

LADY Amen.

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

10 LADY 'Thou shalt not steal'?

LUCIO Ay, that he razed.

75 aves welcoming shouts 76 safe discretion sound judgment 77 affect cultivate, like
79 Lead may they lead you 82 concerns . . . place is important to me to establish the full
extent of my position 88 Touching regarding 1.2 Lucio from the Italian for "light"
(bright/of loose morals) 2 composition settlement 3 fall upon attack 4 peace . . .
Hungary's plays on the notion of a "hungry peace," during which jobless soldiers struggled to
feed themselves 7 sanctimonious outwardly pious 9 table thin stone or wood slab
inscribed with the Ten Commandments 11 razed erased

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.

LADY I never heard any soldier dislike it.

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

LADY No? A dozen times at least.

GENTLEMAN What, in metre?

LUCIO In any proportion or in any language.

GENTLEMAN I think, or in any religion.

LUCIO Ay, why not? Grace is grace, despite of all controversy: as for example, thou thyself art a wicked villain, despite of all grace.

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

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

GENTLEMAN And thou the velvet. Thou art good velvet;

LUCIO

I will, out of thine own confession, learn to begin thy health, but, whilst I live, forget to drink after thee.

13 from their functions to desist from their occupations put forth set out 15 meat a meal petition entreaty 20 metre verse 21 proportion form 24 controversy refers to religious dispute over the nature of God's grace (mercy), in particular the puritan-Catholic controversy over whether one's soul was saved by one's actions in life or by grace alone 26 there . . . us i.e. we are both cut from the same cloth 28 lists plain fabric edging 31 three-piled piece treble thick, of high-quality material/sufferer from hemorrhoids lief willingly 32 kersey plain, coarsely woven cloth piled luxuriously thick/bald (a symptom of syphilis) 33 French velvet fancy garment (plays on the fact that syphilis was known as the "French disease," and syphilitic scars were sometimes covered with velvet patches) feelingly aptly/painfully 34 painful feeling conviction/pain caused by oral syphilitic ulcers 35 confession admission 36 begin . . . thee toast your health, but remember not to drink after you (since the cup will be contaminated)

GENTLEMAN I think I have done myself wrong, have I not?

LADY Yes, that thou hast, whether thou art tainted or free.

Enter Bawd [Mistress Overdone]

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

LADY To what, I pray?

LUCIO Judge.

LADY To three thousand dolours a year.

GENTLEMAN Ay, and more.

LUCIO A French crown more.

GENTLEMAN Thou art always figuring diseases in me, but thou art full of error, I am sound.

LUCIO Nay, not as one would say, healthy: but so sound as things that are hollow.

GENTLEMAN How now! Which of your hips has the most profound sciatica? *To Mistress Overdone*

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

LADY Who's that, I pray thee?

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

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. And it is for getting Madam Julietta with child.

38 done myself wrong misrepresented myself/laid myself open to mockery 40 tainted or free infected or healthy Overdone her name implies that she is a worn-out prostitute (to "do" was slang for "to have sex") 41 Mitigation i.e. one who relieves (mitigates) sexual desire 44 Judge guess 45 dolours lamentations/silver coins 47 French crown gold coin (plays on baldness caused by syphilis) 48 figuring calculating/imaging 50 sound healthy/echoingly resonant 51 bones are hollow brittle bones were a symptom of late syphilis impiety lust, sin 54 profound acute sciatica pain in the upper hip, thought to be a symptom of syphilis 58 Marry by the Virgin Mary 63 after despite

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

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

GENTLEMAN But most of all agreeing with the proclamation.

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

Exeunt [Lucio et al]

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

Enter Clown [Pompey]

How now? What's the news with you?

POMPEY Yonder man is carried to prison.

MISTRESS OVERDONE Well, what has he done?

POMPEY A woman.

80 MISTRESS OVERDONE But what's his offence?

POMPEY Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.

MISTRESS OVERDONE What?

POMPEY You have not heard of the proclamation, have you?

85 MISTRESS OVERDONE What proclamation, man?

POMPEY All houses in the suburbs of Virginia 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,

90 but that a wise burgher put in for them.

68 *precise* scrupulous 69 *draws* . . . *purpose* is relevant to the conversation we had on that topic 71 *proclamation* public declaration/legal prohibition 74 *sweat* sweating-sickness/induction of sweating as a treatment for syphilis 75 *custom-shrunk* lacking in customers *Pompey* his name has (ironic) connotations of "pomp and splendor": Pompey the Great was a famous Roman general of the first century BC 77 *Yonder man* i.e. Claudio 78 *done* Pompey's response puns on the sense of "had sex with" 81 *Groping* . . . *river* i.e. sex (literally, a reference to catching fish by hand) *peculiar* privately owned, with play on female private parts 82 *maid* young unmarried woman/virgin (plays on the sense of "type of fish") 86 *houses* . . . *suburbs* brothels, almost always situated in city suburbs 89 *stand for seed* like plants, remain unharvested so that they may generate another crop (stand plays on the sense of "have an erection" and seed on "semen") 90 *burgher* citizen put in bid/interceded

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
95 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
100 in the service, you will be considered.

MISTRESS OVERDONE What's to do here, Thomas tapster? Let's
withdraw.

POMPEY Here comes Signior Claudio, led by the provost to
prison, and there's Madam Juliet. *Exeunt*

END

Act 1 Scene 3

running scene 2 continues

*Enter Provost, Claudio, Juliet, Officers; Lucio and the two Gentlemen
[follow]*

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

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

5 CLAUDIO Thus can the demigod Authority
Make us pay down for our offence by weight
The words of heaven; on whom it will, it will,
On whom it will not, so. Yet still 'tis just.

LUCIO Why, how now, Claudio? Whence comes this
10 restraint?

91 *resort* regular visiting 96 *counsellors* advisers/lawyers 98 *tapster* waiter, barman
99 *worn* . . . *service* worked so long and hard in the business/become almost blind from
syphilis through sexually servicing so many men 101 *Thomas* generic name for a tapster
1.3 3 *evil disposition* malice 6 *down* immediately 7 *weight* in full (literally, weighing
rather than counting coins, in order to ensure their true value) 7 *The* . . . *heaven* according
to the Bible (specifically Romans 9:15, in which God says "I will have mercy on him to whom I
will show mercy") 9 *Whence* . . . *restraint?* Why have you been arrested?