

Measure for Measure abbreviated

Act 1, Scene 3

Disclosure

Situation: Now disguised as Friar Lodowick, the duke lets Friar Thomas confidentially know why he has done what he's done, and the role he plans to play.

DUKE: Why I desire thee to give me secret harbor hath a purpose more grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends of burning youth.

FRIAR THOMAS: May your Grace speak of it?

DUKE: I have delivered to Lord Angelo, a man of strict behavior and firm abstinence, my absolute power and place herein Vienna, and he supposes me traveled to Poland, for so I have strewed it in the common ear. Now, pious sir, you will demand of me why I do this.

FRIAR THOMAS: Gladly, my lord.

Duke to Friar Thomas

We have biting statues and laws written
Which for these years we have let slip even
Like a lion in a cave that goes not
Out to prey, as fathers showing to fight,
Having bound up threat'ning twigs of birch taut,
Only to stick it in their children's sight
For terror, unused, the rod in time more
Mocked than feared, so our decrees ne'er used for
Punishment, people plucking justice by
The nose, the baby beating the nurse; way
Too much scope I've given to people. I
Have on him imposed the office; he may
Under cover of my name enforce it;
Yet I plan to bring no-one discredit.

DUKE: To behold his sway I will, as 'twere a brother of your order, visit both Angelo and the people. Therefore I prithee supply me with the habit, and instruct me how I may formally in person bear like a true friar. More reasons for this action at our more leisure shall I render you. Only this one: Lord Angelo is precise, stands on his defense against slander, and scarce confesses that his blood flows or that his appetite is more than bread.