

Measure for Measure abbreviated

Act 4, Scene 4

Remorse

Situation: Angelo by now has been led to believe that he has violated the virgin Isabel and that her brother Claudio has lost his head. He acknowledges that he has betrayed his principles. He also learns that within an hour the Duke of Vienna plans to return to the city.

ESCALUS: Every letter he hath writ hath contradicted the other.

ANGELO: In most uneven and distracted manner. His actions show much like to madness. And why meet him at the gates and deliver our authorities there?

ESCALUS: I guess not.

ANGELO: And why should we proclaim it in an hour before his entering.

ESCALUS: He shows his reason for that: to have a prompt settlement of complaints, and to save us from contrived complaints.

ANGELO: Well, I beseech you let it be proclaimed. I'll call upon you early at your house.

ESCALUS: Fare you well.

ANGELO: Good night.

Escalus exits.

Angelo to Himself, No. 2

This deed quite destroys me; now disabled
From normal proceedings. A deflowered
Maid, and by an eminent person who
Enforced the law against it. What is more,
With shame of her maiden loss she may spew
Her just spite. Yet reason dares her no, for
My office bears such credibility
That no one scandal can but ruin thee
Breather. I should have let Claudio live,
Yet his youthful lack of restraint was bad
For the times, and his depth of shame would give
His life dishonor. Still I wish he had
Lived. When once we have forgot our virtue,
All goes wrong. What I should not do I do.