

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

By William Shakespeare

Translation by
Aditi Brennan Kapil

Dramaturgy by Liz Engelman and Andrew Ian Carlson

Commissioned by *Play On Shakespeare*

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Act I, Scene 1

Enter Duke, Escalus, Lords [and Attendants]

DUKE
Escalus.

ESCALUS
My lord.

DUKE
Of government the properties to unfold
Would seem in me t' 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, y' are 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 pow'r. What think you of it?

ESCALUS
If any in Vienna be of worth

Act I, Scene 1

Enter Duke, Escalus, Lords, and Attendant

DUKE
Escalus.

ESCALUS
My lord.

DUKE
To preach on governance and rules of law
Is wasted speech, since we both full well know
That your own knowledge and experience
Surpasses mine, and that any advice
I offer is excess. What then remains
Is that I bless your office with my seal,
And let you do your work. Our citizens,
Our institutions, and our sacred laws,
Our city's justice system, in these realms
You are as wise as are the greatest men
Our nation has produced. Now your commission,
From which I do implore you not to stray.
(to attendant) Call in here Angelo to come before us!

(Attendant exits)

Do you think he will represent me well?
It's after careful thought that I elect
Him in my absence to perform as Duke.
Lend him my power, all of my support,
And deputize him every single organ
Of my position. What do you think?

ESCALUS
If any in Vienna has the worth

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To undergo such ample grace and honor,
It is Lord Angelo.

Enter Angelo.

DUKE

Look where he comes.

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.

To wear such a great honor well,
It is Lord Angelo.

Enter Angelo

DUKE

Look here he comes.

ANGELO

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

DUKE

Angelo,

With every word you speak, with every deed,
You teach us all to lead a moral life.
I ask you now to share your boundless virtues,
Put them to use in service of Vienna,
For there are many here who crave your grace.
Heaven means for us to be as torches,
And not shine for ourselves, for if our light
Illuminates not others, then we may
As well have none. One touched by God like you
Should bear issue. Nature would never grant
Her excellence in vain, but like a thrifty
Goddess she names herself your creditor,
And demands for her gifts, your thanks and use.
But forgive me, I feel I waste my speech
on one whose life can advertise my point.
So hear me, Angelo:
In my absence, you will be as myself.
Mortality and mercy in Vienna
Live in your tongue and heart. Old Escalus,
Though first in rank, is your secondary.
Take your commission.

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ANGELO

Now, good my lord,
Let there be some more test made of my mettle
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 honors.
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 th' 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 honor) 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

ANGELO

Please, my good lord
Let there be some more test made of my mettle
Before so noble and so great a title's
stamped upon it.

DUKE

No more evasion.
I have with great care and with thoughtful choice
Decided on you, therefore take your honors.
I leave you now with necessary speed.
The many matters we have not discussed
Will have to wait. I'll write you both,
As I find time, my thoughts and further needs,
How fare my travels, and I'll wish to know
What transpires here at home. And so farewell.
I wish you both successful execution
Of your commissions.

ANGELO

But permit, my lord,
That we escort you some part of the way.

DUKE

My haste does not permit it.
Nor do you need to bother, on my honor,
With any scruple. Your power's as my own,
Free to enforce or qualify the laws
As your own soul deems good. Give me your hand,
I'll secretly away. I love my people,
But don't care for a grand public display.
It may do good but I find I can't bear
To bask in acclamation and in praise,
Nor do I trust the man's discretion much

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That does affect it. Once more fare you well.

ANGELO

The heavens give safety to your purposes!

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.
A pow'r 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 honor.

Exeunt.

Act I, Scene 2

Enter Lucio and two other Gentlemen.

Who does seek such regard. Once more, farewell.

ANGELO

The heavens grant you safety on your journey.

ESCALUS

God's speed until he brings you back in happiness.

DUKE

I thank you. Fare you well.

Duke exits

ESCALUS

I'll ask you, sir, to grant me permission
To freely speak with you. I feel I must
Examine in some depth my name and state.
I'm placed in power, but what this may mean,
I'm not yet clear.

ANGELO

I feel the same. Let us confer a while
That we may reach some satisfaction
Upon this point.

ESCALUS

I will attend your honor.

Exit

Act 1, Scene 2

Enter Lucio and 2 Gentlemen