

William Shakespeare Measure for Measure



+ Sidney Lee

**The Classic Biography:
The Life of William Shakespeare**

William Shakespeare and Sidney Lee

Measure for Measure (The Unabridged Play) + The Classic Biography: The Life of William Shakespeare

e-artnow, 2021

EAN 4064066444754

Table of Contents

Measure for Measure

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

ACT I.

ACT II.

ACT III.

ACT IV.

ACT V.

The Life of William Shakespeare

PREFACE

I—PARENTAGE AND BIRTH

II—CHILDHOOD, EDUCATION, AND MARRIAGE

III—THE FAREWELL TO STRATFORD

IV—ON THE LONDON STAGE

V.—EARLY DRAMATIC EFFORTS

VI—THE FIRST APPEAL TO THE READING PUBLIC

VII—THE SONNETS AND THEIR LITERARY HISTORY

VIII—THE BORROWED CONCEITS OF THE SONNETS

IX—THE PATRONAGE OF THE EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

X—THE SUPPOSED STORY OF INTRIGUE IN THE
SONNETS

XI—THE DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMATIC POWER

XII—THE PRACTICAL AFFAIRS OF LIFE

XIII—MATURITY OF GENIUS

XIV—THE HIGHEST THEMES OF TRAGEDY

XV—THE LATEST PLAYS

XVI—THE CLOSE OF LIFE

XVII—SURVIVORS AND DESCENDANTS

XVIII—AUTOGRAPHS, PORTRAITS, AND MEMORIALS

XIX—BIBLIOGRAPHY

XX—POSTHUMOUS REPUTATION

XXI—GENERAL ESTIMATE

APPENDIX

Measure for Measure

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

[Table of Contents](#)

VICENTIO, Duke of Vienna.

ANGELO, Lord Deputy in the Duke's absence.

ESCALUS, an ancient Lord, joined with Angelo in the deputation.

CLAUDIO, a young Gentleman.

LUCIO, a Fantastic.

Two other like Gentlemen.

VARRIUS, a Gentleman, Servant to the Duke.

PROVOST.

THOMAS, friar.

PETER, friar.

A JUSTICE.

ELBOW, a simple Constable.

FROTH, a foolish Gentleman.

CLOWN, Servant to Mistress Overdone.

ABHORSON, an Executioner.

BARNARDINE, a dissolute Prisoner.

ISABELLA, Sister to Claudio.

MARIANA, betrothed to Angelo.

JULIET, beloved by Claudio.

FRANCISCA, a nun.

MISTRESS OVERDONE, a Bawd.

Lords, Gentlemen, Guards, Officers, and other Attendants.

SCENE: Vienna

ACT I.

[Table of Contents](#)

SCENE I. An apartment in the DUKE'S Palace.

[Enter DUKE, ESCALUS, LORDS, and ATTENDANTS.]

DUKE.

Escalus,—

ESCALUS.

My lord.

DUKE.

Of government the properties to unfold,
Would seem in me to 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, you 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, drest him with our love,
And given his deputation all the organs
Of our own power: what think you of it?

ESCALUS.

If any in Vienna be of worth
To undergo such ample grace and honour,
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 yourself:
Mortality and mercy in Vienna
Live in thy tongue and heart! Old Escalus,
Though first in question, is thy secondary:
Take thy commission.

ANGELO.

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

DUKE.

No more evasion:

We have with a leaven'd and prepared choice
Proceeded to you; therefore take your honours.
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 the 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 honour, 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
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 honour.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. A street.

[Enter Lucio and two Gentlemen.]

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.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

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

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Amen.

LUCIO.

Thou concludest like the sanctimonious pirate that went
to sea
with the ten
commandments, but scraped one out of the table.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Thou shalt not steal?

LUCIO.

Ay, that he razed.

FIRST 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.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I never heard any soldier dislike it.

LUCIO.

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

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

No? A dozen times at least.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

What? in metre?

LUCIO.

In any proportion or in any language.

FIRST 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.

FIRST 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.

FIRST GENTLEMAN. And thou the velvet: thou art good velvet; thou'rt a three-piled piece, I warrant thee: I had as lief be a list of an English kersey as be piled, as thou art piled, for a French velvet. Do I speak feelingly now?

LUCIO. I think thou dost; and, indeed, with most painful feeling of thy speech. I will, out of thine own confession, learn to begin thy health; but, whilst I live, forget to drink after thee.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I think I have done myself wrong; have I not?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

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

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

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

To what, I pray?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Judge.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

To three thousand dollars a year.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Ay, and more.

LUCIO.

A French crown more.

FIRST 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: thy bones are hollow: impiety has made a feast of thee.

[Enter BAWD.]

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

How now! which of your hips has the most profound sciatica?

BAWD. Well, well; there's one yonder arrested and carried to prison was worth five thousand of you all.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Who's that, I pray thee?

BAWD.

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

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Claudio to prison! 'tis not so.

BAWD. 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?

BAWD. I am too sure of it: and it is for getting Madam Julietta with child.

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

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

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

But most of all agreeing with the proclamation.

LUCIO.

Away; let's go learn the truth of it.

[Exeunt Lucio and Gentlemen.]

BAWD.

Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat, what with the

gallows, and what with poverty, I am custom-shrunk.
How now! what's the news with you?

[Enter CLOWN.]

CLOWN.

Yonder man is carried to prison.

BAWD.

Well: what has he done?

CLOWN.

A woman.

BAWD.

But what's his offence?

CLOWN.

Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.

BAWD.

What! is there a maid with child by him?

CLOWN. No; but there's a woman with maid by him. You have not heard of the proclamation, have you?

BAWD.

What proclamation, man?

CLOWN.

All houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down.

BAWD.

And what shall become of those in the city?

CLOWN. They shall stand for seed: they had gone down too, but that a wise burgher put in for them.

BAWD.

But shall all our houses of resort in the suburbs be pulled down?

CLOWN.

To the ground, mistress.

BAWD. Why, here's a change indeed in the
commonwealth! What shall become of me?

CLOWN. Come, fear not you; 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 in the service, you will be considered.

BAWD.

What's to do here, Thomas Tapster? Let's withdraw.

CLOWN. Here comes Signior Claudio, led by the provost
to prison: and there's Madam Juliet.

[Exeunt.]

Scene III. The same.

[Enter PROVOST, CLAUDIO, JULIET, and Officers; LUCIO
and two
Gentlemen.]

CLAUDIO.

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

PROVOST.

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

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 restraint?

CLAUDIO.

From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty:
As surfeit is the father of much fast,
So every scope by the immoderate use
Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,—
Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,—
A thirsty evil; and when we drink we die.
LUCIO. If I could speak so wisely under an arrest, I would
send for certain of my creditors; and yet, to say the truth,
I had as lief have the foppery of freedom as the morality
of imprisonment.—What's thy offence, Claudio?

CLAUDIO.
What but to speak of would offend again.

LUCIO.
What, is't murder?

CLAUDIO.
No.

LUCIO.
Lechery?

CLAUDIO.
Call it so.

PROVOST.
Away, sir; you must go.

CLAUDIO.
One word, good friend.—Lucio, a word with you.

[Takes him aside.]

LUCIO. A hundred, if they'll do you any good. Is lechery
so looked after?

CLAUDIO.
Thus stands it with me:—Upon a true contract
I got possession of Julietta's bed:
You know the lady; she is fast my wife,
Save that we do the denunciation lack

Of outward order;: this we came not to
Only for propagation of a dower
Remaining in the coffer of her friends;
From whom we thought it meet to hide our love
Till time had made them for us. But it chances
The stealth of our most mutual entertainment,
With character too gross, is writ on Juliet.

LUCIO.

With child, perhaps?

CLAUDIO.

Unhappily, even so.

And the new deputy now for the duke,—
Whether it be the fault and glimpse of newness,
Or whether that the body public be
A horse whereon the governor doth ride,
Who, newly in the seat, that it may know
He can command, lets it straight feel the spur:
Whether the tyranny be in his place,
Or in his eminence that fills it up,
I stagger in.—But this new governor
Awakes me all the enrolled penalties
Which have, like unscour'd armour, hung by the wall
So long that nineteen zodiacs have gone round
And none of them been worn; and, for a name,
Now puts the drowsy and neglected act
Freshly on me; 'tis surely for a name.

LUCIO. I warrant it is: and thy head stands so tickle on
thy shoulders that a milkmaid, if she be in love, may sigh
it off. Send after the duke, and appeal to him.

CLAUDIO.

I have done so, but he's not to be found.
I pr'ythee, Lucio, do me this kind service:
This day my sister should the cloister enter,
And there receive her approbation:
Acquaint her with the danger of my state;

Implore her, in my voice, that she make friends
To the strict deputy; bid herself assay him;
I have great hope in that: for in her youth
There is a prone and speechless dialect
Such as moves men; beside, she hath prosperous art
When she will play with reason and discourse,
And well she can persuade.

LUCIO. I pray she may; as well for the encouragement of
the like, which else would stand under grievous
imposition, as for the enjoying of thy life, who I would be
sorry should be thus foolishly lost at a game of tick-tack.
I'll to her.

CLAUDIO.

I thank you, good friend Lucio.

LUCIO.

Within two hours,—

CLAUDIO.

Come, officer, away.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. A Monastery.

[Enter DUKE and FRIAR THOMAS.]

DUKE.

No; holy father; throw away that thought;
Believe not that the dribbling dart of love
Can pierce a complete bosom: why I desire thee
To give me secret harbour hath a purpose
More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends
Of burning youth.

FRIAR.

May your grace speak of it?

DUKE.

My holy sir, none better knows than you
How I have ever lov'd the life remov'd,
And held in idle price to haunt assemblies
Where youth, and cost, a witless bravery keeps.
I have deliver'd to Lord Angelo,—
A man of stricture and firm abstinence,—
My absolute power and place here in Vienna,
And he supposes me travell'd to Poland;
For so I have strew'd it in the common ear,
And so it is received. Now, pious sir,
You will demand of me why I do this?

FRIAR.

Gladly, my lord.

DUKE.

We have strict statutes and most biting laws,—
The needful bits and curbs to headstrong steeds,—
Which for this fourteen years we have let sleep,
Even like an o'ergrown lion in a cave,
That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers,
Having bound up the threat'ning twigs of birch,
Only to stick it in their children's sight
For terror, not to use, in time the rod
Becomes more mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees,
Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead;
And liberty plucks justice by the nose;
The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
Goes all decorum.

FRIAR.

It rested in your grace
To unloose this tied-up justice when you pleas'd;
And it in you more dreadful would have seem'd
Than in Lord Angelo.

DUKE.

I do fear, too dreadful:

Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them

For what I bid them do: for we bid this be done
When evil deeds have their permissive pass
And not the punishment. Therefore, indeed, my father,
I have on Angelo impos'd the office;
Who may, in the ambush of my name, strike home,
And yet my nature never in the fight
To do in slander. And to behold his sway,
I will, as 'twere a brother of your order,
Visit both prince and people: therefore, I pr'ythee,
Supply me with the habit, and instruct me
How I may formally in person bear me
Like a true friar. Moe reasons for this action
At our more leisure shall I render you;
Only, this one:—Lord Angelo is precise;
Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses
That his blood flows, or that his appetite
Is more to bread than stone: hence shall we see,
If power change purpose, what our seemers be.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V. A Nunnery.

[Enter ISABELLA and FRANCISCA.]

ISABELLA.

And have you nuns no further privileges?

FRANCISCA.

Are not these large enough?

ISABELLA.

Yes, truly; I speak not as desiring more,

But rather wishing a more strict restraint

Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare.

LUCIO.

[Within.] Ho! Peace be in this place!

ISABELLA.

Who's that which calls?

FRANCISCA.

It is a man's voice. Gentle Isabella,
Turn you the key, and know his business of him;
You may, I may not; you are yet unsworn:
When you have vow'd, you must not speak with men
But in the presence of the prioress;
Then, if you speak, you must not show your face;
Or, if you show your face, you must not speak.
He calls again; I pray you answer him.

[Exit FRANCISCA.]

ISABELLA.

Peace and prosperity! Who is't that calls?

[Enter LUCIO.]

LUCIO.

Hail, virgin, if you be; as those cheek-roses
Proclaim you are no less! Can you so stead me
As bring me to the sight of Isabella,
A novice of this place, and the fair sister
To her unhappy brother Claudio?

ISABELLA.

Why her unhappy brother? let me ask;
The rather, for I now must make you know
I am that Isabella, and his sister.

LUCIO.

Gentle and fair, your brother kindly greets you:
Not to be weary with you, he's in prison.

ISABELLA.

Woe me! For what?

LUCIO.

For that which, if myself might be his judge,

He should receive his punishment in thanks:
He hath got his friend with child.

ISABELLA.

Sir, make me not your story.

LUCIO.

It is true.

I would not—though 'tis my familiar sin
With maids to seem the lapwing, and to jest,
Tongue far from heart—play with all virgins so:
I hold you as a thing ensky'd and sainted;
By your renouncement an immortal spirit;
And to be talk'd with in sincerity,
As with a saint.

ISABELLA.

You do blaspheme the good in mocking me.

LUCIO.

Do not believe it. Fewness and truth, 'tis thus:
Your brother and his lover have embraced:
As those that feed grow full: as blossoming time,
That from the seedness the bare fallow brings
To teeming foison; even so her plenteous womb
Expreseth his full tilth and husbandry.

ISABELLA.

Some one with child by him?—My cousin Juliet?

LUCIO.

Is she your cousin?

ISABELLA.

Adoptedly, as school-maids change their names
By vain though apt affection.

LUCIO.

She it is.

ISABELLA.

O, let him marry her!

LUCIO.

This is the point.

The duke is very strangely gone from hence;

Bore many gentlemen, myself being one,
In hand, and hope of action: but we do learn
By those that know the very nerves of state,
His givings out were of an infinite distance
From his true-meant design. Upon his place,
And with full line of his authority,
Governs Lord Angelo: a man whose blood
Is very snow-broth; one who never feels
The wanton stings and motions of the sense.
But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge
With profits of the mind, study, and fast.
He,—to give fear to use and liberty,
Which have for long run by the hideous law,
As mice by lions,—hath pick'd out an act,
Under whose heavy sense your brother's life
Falls into forfeit: he arrests him on it;
And follows close the rigour of the statute
To make him an example; all hope is gone.
Unless you have the grace by your fair prayer
To soften Angelo: and that's my pith
Of business 'twixt you and your poor brother.

ISABELLA.

Doth he so seek his life?

LUCIO.

Has censur'd him

Already; and, as I hear, the provost hath

A warrant for his execution.

ISABELLA.

Alas! what poor ability's in me

To do him good.

LUCIO.

Assay the power you have.

ISABELLA.

My power! alas, I doubt,—

LUCIO.

Our doubts are traitors,

And make us lose the good we oft might win
By fearing to attempt. Go to Lord Angelo,
And let him learn to know, when maidens sue,
Men give like gods; but when they weep and kneel,
All their petitions are as freely theirs
As they themselves would owe them.

ISABELLA.

I'll see what I can do.

LUCIO.

But speedily.

ISABELLA.

I will about it straight;
No longer staying but to give the Mother
Notice of my affair. I humbly thank you:
Commend me to my brother: soon at night
I'll send him certain word of my success.

LUCIO.

I take my leave of you.

ISABELLA.

Good sir, adieu.

[Exeunt.]

ACT II.

[Table of Contents](#)

Scene I. A hall in ANGELO'S house.

[Enter ANGELO, ESCALUS, a JUSTICE, PROVOST, Officers, and other Attendants.]

ANGELO.

We must not make a scarecrow of the law,
Setting it up to fear the birds of prey,
And let it keep one shape till custom make it
Their perch, and not their terror.

ESCALUS.

Ay, but yet

Let us be keen, and rather cut a little
Than fall and bruise to death. Alas! this gentleman,
Whom I would save, had a most noble father.

Let but your honour know,—

Whom I believe to be most strait in virtue,—
That, in the working of your own affections,
Had time coher'd with place, or place with wishing,
Or that the resolute acting of your blood
Could have attain'd the effect of your own purpose,
Whether you had not sometime in your life
Err'd in this point which now you censure him,
And pull'd the law upon you.

ANGELO.

'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall. I not deny
The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,
May, in the sworn twelve, have a thief or two

Guiltier than him they try. What's open made to justice,
That justice seizes. What knows the laws
That thieves do pass on thieves? 'Tis very pregnant,
The jewel that we find, we stoop and take it,
Because we see it; but what we do not see
We tread upon, and never think of it.
You may not so extenuate his offence
For I have had such faults; but rather tell me,
When I, that censure him, do so offend,
Let mine own judgment pattern out my death,
And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die.
ESCALUS.

Be it as your wisdom will.

ANGELO.

Where is the provost?

PROVOST.

Here, if it like your honour.

ANGELO.

See that Claudio

Be executed by nine tomorrow morning:

Bring him his confessor; let him be prepar'd;

For that's the utmost of his pilgrimage.

[Exit PROVOST.]

ESCALUS.

Well, heaven forgive him! and forgive us all!

Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall:

Some run from brakes of vice, and answer none,

And some condemned for a fault alone.

[Enter ELBOW, FROTH, CLOWN, Officers, &c.]

ELBOW. Come, bring them away: if these be good people
in a commonweal that do nothing but use their abuses in
common houses, I know no law; bring them away.

ANGELO.

How now, sir! What's your name? and what's the matter?

ELBOW. If it please your honour, I am the poor duke's constable, and my name is Elbow; I do lean upon justice, sir, and do bring in here before your good honour two notorious benefactors.

ANGELO. Benefactors! Well; what benefactors are they? are they not malefactors?

ELBOW. If it please your honour, I know not well what they are; but precise villains they are, that I am sure of; and void of all profanation in the world that good Christians ought to have.

ESCALUS.

This comes off well; here's a wise officer.

ANGELO. Go to;—what quality are they of? Elbow is your name? Why dost thou not speak, Elbow?

CLOWN.

He cannot, sir; he's out at elbow.

ANGELO.

What are you, sir?

ELBOW. He, sir? a tapster, sir; parcel-bawd; one that serves a bad woman; whose house, sir, was, as they say, plucked down in the suburbs; and now she professes a hot-house, which, I think, is a very ill house too.

ESCALUS.

How know you that?

ELBOW.

My wfe, sir, whom I detest before heaven and your honour,—

ESCALUS.

How! thy wife!

ELBOW.

Ay, sir; who, I thank heaven, is an honest woman,—

ESCALUS.

Dost thou detest her therefore?

ELBOW. I say, sir, I will detest myself also, as well as she, that this house, if it be not a bawd's house, it is pity of her life, for it is a naughty house.

ESCALUS.

How dost thou know that, constable?

ELBOW. Marry, sir, by my wife; who, if she had been a woman cardinally given, might have been accused in fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness there.

ESCALUS.

By the woman's means?

ELBOW. Ay, sir, by Mistress Overdone's means: but as she spit in his face, so she defied him.

CLOWN.

Sir, if it please your honour, this is not so.

ELBOW. Prove it before these varlets here, thou honourable man, prove it.

ESCALUS.

[To ANGELO.] Do you hear how he misplaces?

CLOWN. Sir, she came in great with child; and longing,—saving your honour's reverence—for stew'd prunes; sir, we had but two in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit dish, a dish of some threepence; your honours have seen such dishes; they are not China dishes, but very good dishes.

ESCALUS.

Go to, go to; no matter for the dish, sir.

CLOWN. No, indeed, sir, not of a pin; you are therein in the right; but to the point. As I say, this Mistress Elbow, being, as I say, with child, and being great-bellied, and longing, as I said, for prunes; and having but two in the dish, as I said, Master Froth here, this very man, having eaten the rest, as I said, and, as I say, paying for them very honestly;—for, as you know, Master Froth, I could not give you threepence again,—

FROTH.

No, indeed.

CLOWN. Very well; you being then, if you be remember'd, cracking the stones of the foresaid prunes,—

FROTH.

Ay, so I did indeed.

CLOWN. Why, very well: I telling you then, if you be remember'd, that such a one and such a one were past cure of the thing you wot of, unless they kept very good diet, as I told you,—

FROTH.

All this is true.

CLOWN.

Why, very well then.

ESCALUS.

Come, you are a tedious fool: to the purpose. What was done to

Elbow's wife that he hath cause to complain of? Come me to what

was done to her.

CLOWN.

Sir, your honour cannot come to that yet.

ESCALUS.

No, sir, nor I mean it not.

CLOWN. Sir, but you shall come to it, by your honour's

leave. And, I beseech you, look into Master Froth here, sir, a man of fourscore pound a-year; whose father died at Hallowmas:—was't not at Hallowmas, Master Froth?

FROTH.

All-hallond eve.

CLOWN. Why, very well; I hope here be truths: He, sir, sitting, as I say, in a lower chair, sir;—'twas in the 'Bunch of Grapes', where, indeed, you have a delight to sit, have you not?—

FROTH.

I have so; because it is an open room, and good for winter.

CLOWN.

Why, very well then;—I hope here be truths.

ANGELO.

This will last out a night in Russia,
When nights are longest there: I'll take my leave,
And leave you to the hearing of the cause;
Hoping you'll find good cause to whip them all.

ESCALUS.

I think no less. Good morrow to your lordship.

[Exit ANGELO.]

Now, sir, come on; what was done to Elbow's wife, once more?

CLOWN.

Once, sir? there was nothing done to her once.

ELBOW.

I beseech you, sir, ask him what this man did to my wife.

CLOWN.

I beseech your honour, ask me.

ESCALUS.

Well, sir: what did this gentleman to her?