

ANGELO

How now, fair maid?

ISABELLA I am come to know your pleasure.

ANGELO

That you might know it would much better please me
Than to demand what 'tis. Your brother cannot live. 35

ISABELLA Even so. Heaven keep your Honor.

ANGELO

Yet may he live a while. And it may be
As long as you or I. Yet he must die.

ISABELLA Under your sentence?

ANGELO Yea. 40

ISABELLA

When, I beseech you? That in his reprieve,
Longer or shorter, he may be so fitted
That his soul sicken not.

ANGELO

Ha! Fie, these filthy vices! 'Tis all as easy
Falsely to take away a life true made
As to put metal in restrainèd means 50
To make a false one.

ISABELLA

'Tis set down so in heaven, but not in Earth.

ANGELO

Say you so? Then I shall pose you quickly:
Which had you rather, that the most just law
Now took your brother's life, or, to redeem him, 55
Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness
As she that he hath stained?

ISABELLA Sir, believe this:

I had rather give my body than my soul.

ANGELO

I talk not of your soul. Our compelled sins 60
Stand more for number than for accompt.

ISABELLA How say you?

ANGELO Answer to this:

I, pronounce a sentence on your brother's life.
Might there not be a charity in sin
To save this brother's life?

ISABELLA Please you to do 't, 70
I'll take it as a peril to my soul,
It is no sin at all, but charity.

ANGELO

Pleased you to do 't, at peril of your soul,
Were equal poise of sin and charity.

ISABELLA

That I do beg his life, if it be sin 75
Heaven let me bear it. You granting of my suit,
If that be sin, I'll make it my morn prayer
To have it added to the faults of mine
And nothing of your answer.

ANGELO Nay, but hear me.

Your sense pursues not mine. Either you are ignorant, 80
Or seem so, crafty, and that's not good.

ISABELLA

Let me be ignorant and in nothing good,
But graciously to know I am no better.

ANGELO

Thus wisdom wishes to appear most bright 85
When it doth tax itself, But mark me.
To be receivèd plain, I'll speak more gross:
Your brother is to die. 90