

ESCALUS	Good even, good father.	215
DUKE, <i>as Friar</i>	Bliss and goodness on you.	
ESCALUS	Of whence are you?	
DUKE, <i>as Friar</i>	Not of this country, though my chance is now To use it for my time. I am a brother Of gracious order, late come from the See In special business from his Holiness.	220
ESCALUS	What news abroad i' th' world?	
DUKE, <i>as Friar</i>	None but that there is so great a fever on goodness that the dissolution of it must cure it. Novelty is only in request, and it is as dangerous to be aged in any kind of course as it is virtuous to be constant in any undertaking. There is scarce truth enough alive to make societies secure, but security enough to make fellowships accursed. Much upon this riddle runs the wisdom of the world. This news is old enough, yet it is every day's news. I pray you, sir, of what disposition was the Duke?	225 230
ESCALUS	One that, above all other strifes, contended especially to know himself.	
DUKE, <i>as Friar</i>	What pleasure was he given to?	235
ESCALUS	Rather rejoicing to see another merry than merry at anything which professed to make him rejoice—a gentleman of all temperance. But leave we him to his events, with a prayer they may prove prosperous, and let me desire to know how you find Claudio prepared. I am made to understand that you have lent him visitation.	240
DUKE, <i>as Friar</i>	He professes to have received no sinister measure from his judge but most willingly humbles himself to the determination of justice. Yet had he framed to himself, by the instruction of his frailty, many deceiving promises of life, which I, by my good leisure, have discredited to him, and now is he resolved to die.	245
ESCALUS	You have paid the heavens your function and the prisoner the very debt of your calling. I have labored for the poor gentleman to the extremest shore of my modesty, but my brother justice have I found so severe that he hath forced me to tell him he is indeed Justice.	250 255
DUKE, <i>as Friar</i>	If his own life answer the straitness of his proceeding, it shall become him well; wherein if he chance to fail, he hath sentenced himself.	
ESCALUS	I am going to visit the prisoner. Fare you well.	
DUKE, <i>as Friar</i>	Peace be with you.	260

Escalus exit.

DUKE
He who the sword of heaven will bear
Should be as holy as severe,