

# MEASURE FOR MEASURE 2026

## ISABELLA

### SIDE 1

To whom should I complain? Did I tell this,  
Who would believe me? O, perilous mouths,  
That bear in them one and the selfsame tongue,  
Either of condemnation or approval,  
Bidding the law make curtsy to their will,  
Hooking both right and wrong to th' appetite,  
To follow as it draws. I'll to my brother.  
Though he hath fall'n by prompture of the blood,  
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honor  
That, had he twenty heads to tender down  
On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up  
Before his sister should her body stoop  
To such abhorred pollution.  
Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die.  
More than our brother is our chastity.  
I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,  
And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest.

### SIDE 2

O, you beast!  
O faithless coward, O dishonest wretch,  
Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?  
Is't not a kind of incest to take life  
From thine own sister's shame? What should I think?  
Heaven shield my mother played my father fair,  
For such a warpèd slip of wilderness  
Ne'er issued from his blood. Take my defiance;  
Die, perish. Might but my bending down  
Reprive thee from thy fate, it should proceed.  
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,  
No word to save thee.

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## ANGELO

### SIDE 1

What's this? What's this? Is this her fault or mine?  
The tempter or the tempted, who sins most, ha?  
Not she, nor doth she tempt; but it is I  
That, lying by the violet in the sun,  
Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,  
Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be  
That modesty may more betray our sense  
Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground enough,  
Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary  
And pitch our evils there? O fie, fie, fie!  
What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?  
Dost thou desire her foully for those things  
That make her good? O, let her brother live.

### SIDE 2

Who will believe thee, Isabel?  
My unsoiled name, th' austereness of my life,  
My vouch against you, and my place i' th' state  
Will so your accusation overweigh  
That you shall stifle in your own report  
And smell of calumny. I have begun,  
And now I give my sensual race the rein.  
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;  
Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes  
That banish what they sue for. Redeem thy brother  
By yielding up thy body to my will,  
Or else he must not only die the death,  
But thy unkindness shall his death draw out  
To ling'ring sufferance. Answer me tomorrow,  
Or by the affection that now guides me most,  
I'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you,  
Say what you can, my false o'erweighs your true.

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## CLAUDIO

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where,  
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot,  
This sensible warm motion to become  
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
In thrilling region of thick-ribbèd ice,  
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds  
And blown with restless violence round about  
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst  
Of those that lawless and incertain thought  
Imagine howling — 'tis too horrible.  
The weariest and most loathèd worldly life  
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment  
Can lay on nature is a paradise  
To what we fear of death.  
Sweet sister, let me live.  
What sin you do to save a brother's life,  
Nature dispenses with the deed so far  
That it becomes a virtue.

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## DUKE

### SIDE 1

No more evasion.

We have with a leavened and preparèd choice  
Proceeded to you. Therefore, take your honors.

Our haste from hence is of so quick condition  
That it prefers itself and leaves unquestioned  
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.

Your scope is as mine own,  
So to enforce or qualify the laws  
As to your soul seems good.

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.

### SIDE 2

The hand that hath made you fair hath made you good. The goodness that is cheap in beauty makes beauty brief in goodness, but grace, being the soul of your complexion, shall keep the body of it ever fair. The assault that Angelo hath made to you, fortune hath conveyed to my understanding; and but that frailty hath examples for his falling, I should wonder at Angelo. How will you do to content this substitute and to save your brother? / Have you not heard speak of Mariana, the sister of Frederick, the great soldier who miscarried at sea? / She should this Angelo have married, was affianced to her oath, and the nuptial appointed. Between which time of the contract and limit of the solemnity, her brother Frederick was wracked at sea, having in that perished vessel the dowry of his sister. But mark how heavily this befell to the poor gentlewoman.

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## LUCIO

Gentle and fair, your brother kindly greets you.  
Not to be weary with you, he's in prison.  
For that which, if myself might be his judge,  
He should receive his punishment in thanks:  
He hath got his friend with child.  
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 enskied and sainted,  
By your renouncement an immortal spirit,  
And to be talked with in sincerity  
As with a saint.  
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  
Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry.