

Fragment
from Measure for Measure - the novel that never was

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distress - had he been wrong about Angelo all along? Was his trusted friend and ally now showing his true colours? No, although the exact nature and flow of Angelo's methods were not yet entirely clear, the final outcome would show that his trust had not been misplaced. But still, the event was unfolding rapidly now as it neared conclusion, and he must maintain close contact to ensure that Claudio was not harmed.

The Duke, still disguised as a friar, descended again into the bowels of the castle, to the gaol, the gaol which he had so recently seen as a place to punish the guilty; now he could not help himself from wondering how many other Claudios were in that horrible place. Although only Claudio's pardon concerned him, the Duke could not show himself yet, and he enquired generally of the Provost as to whether there had been any visitors that night.

"None since the curfew rung" replied the Provost, slightly surprised at the question - only a desperate mission would bring any reasonable person to the gaol at night.

"Not Isabel?". The Duke's self-control was starting to fail him. Regaining himself, he quickly added, "They will then eren't be long." ?

Realizing that the duke was referring to visitors who might desire to see Claudio one last time before his execution, the Provost allowed his sympathy for Claudio's position to show. The Duke then found himself defending Angelo's actions, in much the same way that he had been trying, over the past days, to find justifications for those actions. "Were he mealed with that which he corrects, then were he tyrannous" - but Angelo is not a

tyrant, he is a just man defending the moral principles in which he deeply believes, and which he practices in his own life.

They are interrupted by a knocking on the door, and the Duke's hopes soar; here then is the pardon which will save Claudio's life, and Angelo's honour. While the Provost leaves to call the gatekeeper to let the caller in, the Duke reflects on the nature of the Provost, a man whom he had acknowledged merely as part of his official staff, a part with a particularly disagreeable duty to perform. Now suddenly, this part has a personality, and an unexpectedly gentle personality at that: "seldom-when the steeled gaoler is the friend of men".

As the Duke and the Provost await the arrival of the messenger, the Duke finds that the Provost is also more perceptive than he had thought; the Provost knows that, for whatever reason, the Duke is certain that a pardon is coming. However, he also assures the Duke that, despite all appeals, the signs are clear that the pardon will not come.

The messenger soon arrives, and as he hands a letter to the Provost, adds a very unusual caution from Angelo: "My lord hath sent you this note, and by me this further charge, that you swerve not from the smallest article of it, neither in time, matter, or other circumstance". The Duke's spirits soar once more; surely Angelo has at last seen that a young man cannot be executed for being in love. The Provost has more accurately perceived the meaning behind the verbal message, and quickly dashes the Duke's hopes.

"I told you: Lord Angelo, belike thinking me remiss in mine

B+ Dialogue skilfully woven in.