Signet Classic

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
TWELFTH NIGHT
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL
MEASURE FOR MEASURE
KING LEAR

This collection of critical essays, designed to enhance viewing of the highly acclaimed BBC productions shown on the PBS series "The Shakespeare Hour," gives new depth and meaning to these five immortal plays. Shakespeare looks at love in all its disguises and all its forms—from the illusions of love so marvelously captured in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to the troubled love between parent and child in *King Lear*, in comedy that holds love up to laughter, in tragedy that exposes love's darkest consequences. And as each prominent critic takes a close look at both the play and the BBC production, Shakespeare's complex, often contradictory, and always profound vision of love reveals the timelessness of the bard's drama.

The Shakespeare Hour

*With an Introduction by Edward Quinn and a critical bibliography covering "Shakespeare on Television"*

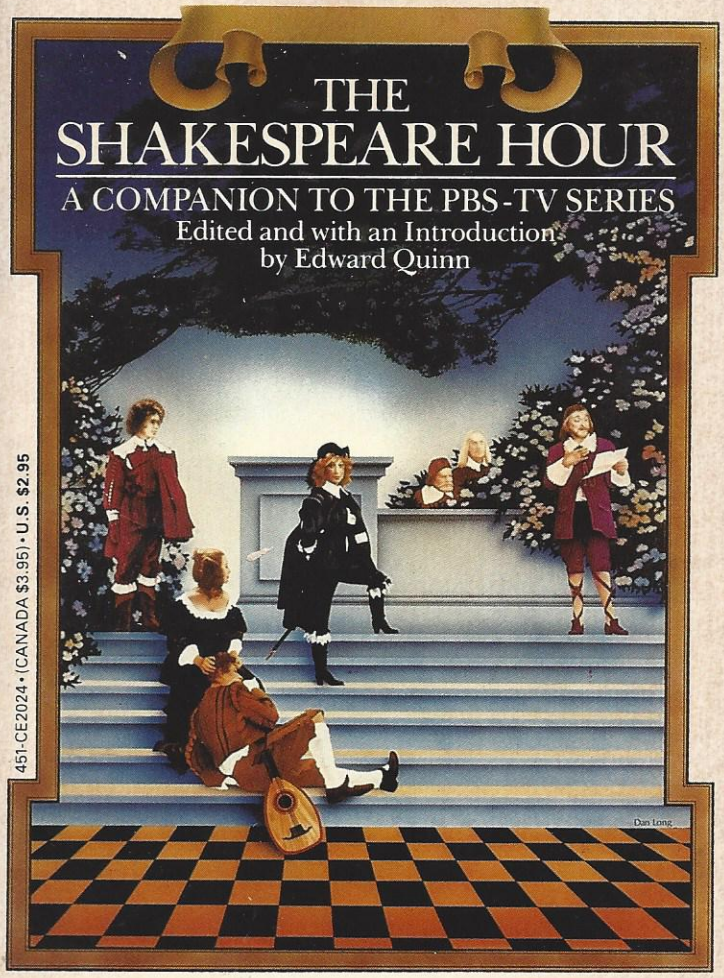

ISBN 0-451-52024-6

Signet Classic

# THE SHAKESPEARE HOUR

## A COMPANION TO THE PBS-TV SERIES

Edited and with an Introduction by Edward Quinn




451-CE2024 • (CANADA $3.95) • U.S. $2.95

Essays by leading critics on the brilliant BBC productions of:

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
TWELFTH NIGHT
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL
MEASURE FOR MEASURE
KING LEAR

With 8 pages of photos from the TV productions

## AN EXTRAORDINARY CRITICAL ANTHOLOGY

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*: David Young of Oberlin College takes a revealing look at the special problems of staging one of Shakespeare's most popular comedies and highlights the play's intricate design and remarkable poetry.

*Twelfth Night*: Jack Jorgens of American University sees the strain of sadness underlying the "happy" action of this comedy, a theme emphasized by the mellow, autumnal quality of director John Gorrie's production.

*All's Well That Ends Well*: John Russel Brown of the University of Michigan regards this play as one of Shakespeare's most original comedies, a play that delightfully questions the grounds of a happy marriage.

*Measure for Measure*: John F. Andrews, editor of *The Shakespeare Quarterly*, calls this a tragicomedy of love on trial and discusses the visual potency of the superb BBC production.

*King Lear*: Frank Kermode of Columbia University views this masterwork as a tragedy about learning to love—from the love contest among the King's daughters in the beginning to a repentant Lear bent over the dead body of Cordelia at the end, one of the most powerful scenes in the history of drama.

---

EDWARD QUINN is a Professor of English at City University of New York and is the editor of *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare.*

# THE SHAKESPEARE HOUR

## A COMPANION TO THE PBS-TV SERIES

EDITED AND
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY

Edward Quinn
*The City College of New York*

A SIGNET CLASSIC
NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY
NEW YORK AND SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO

THE SHAKESPEARE HOUR series is made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Morgan Guaranty Trust Company of New York.

The productions seen in THE SHAKESPEARE HOUR were originally telecast as part of THE SHAKESPEARE PLAYS, a BBC-TV and Time–Life Television co-production.

THE SHAKESPEARE HOUR is produced by WNET/New York.

From WNET
FOR THE BOOK:
Project Director: Timothy Gunn
Project Manager: Robert Miller
Project Coordinator: Catherine Cevoli
Editorial: Lee Dannay
Assistance: Karen Krongold

FOR THE SERIES:
Project Director: Marie Squerciati
Executive Producer: Donald Johnson
Producers: Harvey Bellin, Tom Kieffer



SIGNET, SIGNET CLASSIC, MENTOR, PLUME, MERIDIAN AND NAL BOOKS
are published *in the United States* by New American Library,
1633 Broadway, New York, New York 10019,
*in Canada* by The New American Library of Canada Limited,
81 Mack Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario M1L 1M8

First Printing, January, 1986

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# CONTENTS

# Measure for Measure

Producer ..... Cedric Messina
Director ..... Desmond Davis

CAST
*(In Order of Appearance)*

Duke ..... Kenneth Colley
Isabella ..... Kate Nelligan
Angelo ..... Tim Piggot-Smith
Claudio ..... Christopher Strauli
Lucio ..... John McEnery
Mariana ..... Jacqueline Pearce
Pompey ..... Frank Middlemass
Provost ..... Alun Armstrong
Mistress Overdone ..... Adrienne Corri
Elbow ..... Ellis Jones
Froth ..... John Clegg
Barnardine ..... William Sleigh
Abhorson ..... Neil McCarthy
Juliet ..... Yolande Palfrey
Francisca ..... Eileen Page
Escalus ..... Kevin Stoney
Friar Thomas ..... Godfrey Jackman
First Gentleman ..... Alan Tucker
Second Gentleman ..... John Abbott
A Justice ..... David Browning
Servant ..... Geoffrey Cousins
Pageboy ..... David King Lassman

# MEASURE FOR MEASURE

The BBC *Measure for Measure* has been justly praised as one of the most successful productions in *The Shakespeare Plays* series. It features strong performances by a cast that includes Kevin Colley as a Duke who inspires our trust and confidence; Tim Pigott–Smith as an Angelo with a hint of the same insecurity and rigidity that this same actor brought to the part of Ronald Merrick in *The Jewel in the Crown*; Kate Nelligan as an Isabella who seems well suited to the role of the ardent novitiate whom circumstances will not allow to withdraw to the cloister; and John McEnery as a Lucio whose brash calumny is both a constant delight to the audience and a perpetual irritant to the "Friar." Into the bargain are thrown a warmhearted but dissolute Pompey, played by the same actor (Frank Middlemass) who endeared himself to audiences as the lovable headmaster in *To Serve Them All My Days*, and an Escalus (Kevin Stoney) who is thoroughly convincing as the balanced and reliable second

in command to the Duke. Directed with intelligence and sensitivity by Desmond Davis and exquisitely designed by Stuart Walker, this is a *Measure* that delivers fresh insights into Shakespeare's dramaturgy in every scene and one that richly repays several viewings.

Among the many virtues that reviewers have singled out is the visual potency of the production: the elegant baroque interiors of the Viennese court scenes with their receding chambers, their symbolic interplays of light and shadow, and their omnipresent mirrors, all conspiring to make Angelo confront a self of whose existence he had been previously unaware; the rowdy tavern, so evocatively rendered that we can almost smell the beer and body odors of the Bawd and her tapster; the sun-whitened pillars and arches of the courtyard of Saint Clare, where Isabella first appears, in Lucio's words as "a thing enskied and sainted"; the squalor of the prison, a dungeon whose clanking bars and groans of anguish seem but a short remove from the fearful death "we know not where" that Claudio summons up his interchange with Isabella in III, i. Only the final street setting appears too much like a studio backdrop, and even that can almost be justified as a fit locale for the patently staged "trial" the Duke resorts to as he demonstrates that all's well that ends well.





## I

Whatever else we say about this production, we must begin by noting the fidelity with which it attempts to realize the spirit of a play in which the Duke, "like pow'r divine," looks upon all "passes" and makes them "But instruments of some more mightier member/That sets them on." To be sure, there is enough black humor in this rendering of *Measure for Measure* to keep us mindful of those commentators who have described it as a "dark comedy," a "problem play" in which ethical questions are treated with more ambiguity than is typical of the lighter romantic comedies of Shakespeare's earlier period. There is no denying that the "Friar" seems to be having it both ways when he maintains that it is "no sin" for Mariana to go to bed with Angelo under circumstances paralleling those for which he counsels Juliet to "repent." And enough "corruption" has been allowed to "boil and bubble" that one cannot help feeling that, whatever his merits, the Duke has permitted his city to become an emblem of human depravity, with all the urban ills that Shakespeare's contemporaries were pointing to in early seventeenth-century London. But if there are ways in which the ruler we see in *Measure for Measure* is superficially similar to the "old fantastical duke of dark corners" depicted in Lucio's slanders, the real Duke of this production is a man who

"would have dark deeds darkly answered" in a very different—and much more positive—sense.

This Duke is a man who has been negligent in the past (as he notes in his "confession" to Friar Thomas upon entering the monastery in I, iii) and a man many of whose best-laid plans go awry in the present (as Claudio, Angelo, and Barnardine each fail or decline to play the parts he has scripted for them). But for all his human frailties this Duke is nevertheless a man whose role in the action proves "providential." As he moves among his people in disguise, having set aside the trappings of his wonted ceremony and power, he is somewhat reminiscent of Henry V as Shakespeare had earlier portrayed "the mirror of all Christian kings" on the eve of the battle of Agincourt. As he secludes himself and his purposes from those who must govern the city in his absence, he resembles the "Deus absconditus," the sometimes "hidden God," whose mysterious ways would later be the subject of Pascal's deepest reflections. It would be going too far, I think, to press the analogy between this Duke's divestiture of office and the New Testament God's divestiture of majesty in the Incarnation (Philippians 2:5–7), for the Duke of *Measure for Measure* is too error-prone and improvisatory to serve as the allegorical Christ figure that some interpreters have sought to make him. But in his various aspects as "father," "shepherd," "dread lord," and "grace," this Duke nev-





ertheless reminds us that in Shakespeare's time the secular ruler was habitually thought of and referred to as God's deputy on earth.

It would not have shocked Shakespeare's original audiences, then, to see a good "Duke absconditus" assume the persona of a friar, since the two sacred offices were less distinct in their minds than they tend to be in our own more secular age. Nor is it likely that they would have had any difficulty crediting the integrity of a ruler who applied "craft against vice," even if such craft were to include a bed-trick. There was Biblical precedent for such a device, after all (Genesis 38), and Shakespeare had already depicted its use by a worthy heroine in *All's Well That Ends Well.* It was a commonplace, of course, that, as the Duke says, "He who the sword of heaven will bear/Should be as holy as severe"; but it was not considered to be a violation of "holiness" for the magistrate to use extraordinary means, when appropriate, to accomplish justified ends.

We should not fail to notice that in electing to present the Duke "straight"—that is, in his own terms rather than in Lucio's terms—the producers of the BBC *Measure for Measure* were going against the prevailing tendency of the late 1970s, when this television version of the play first appeared. There had been several highly publicized stage renderings of *Measure for Measure* in which the Duke came across either as a Machia-

vellian manipulator or as something of a petty tyrant, playing God with his subjects' lives without the nobility of purpose to make such maneuverings palatable to the audience. In one notorious production by the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Duke was treated with such contempt by the director that he was lowered into Vienna for the trial scene by means of a scaffold bearing the sign "Duke ex machina." In other productions he came across as a bumbling and somewhat voyeuristic meddler. And in several productions his concluding words—proposing marriage to Isabella—were either left hanging awkwardly in the air (after all, Isabella is given no reply in Shakespeare's text) or were overtly refused by a heroine who made a point of showing that she considered them inappropriate.

Now, it may be that some of these prior renderings of the Duke captured problematic qualities in his character that are not conveyed in the BBC version. But, given a choice, I suspect that most viewers will prefer a treatment of the Duke that is compatible with the main thrust of the remainder of the play; for it can be argued that the play "works" best if we take the Duke at his own estimate and that of Escalus, who tells the "Friar" that the absent Duke was "one that, above all other strifes, contended especially to know himself. . . ." "a gentleman of all temperance."

If we do accept it as a donnée of the play that the Duke is a man of wisdom and probity,





we are in a better position, I think, to see that what happens to the other characters is, in a generic sense, "happy." And in so doing, we are able to respond to the Duke's role in bringing about the various devout consummations as that of an agent of providence, a minister of grace who puts Claudio and Isabella and Angelo through a good deal of agony but does so in such a way as to "test" each of them, to teach them self-knowledge, and eventually to bring them to a point where each is able to survive a final trial that requires a spirit of humility, forgiveness, or love that was absent or deficient at the outset. Viewed from this perspective, the Duke's role in the play is that of a caring physician. Recognizing that Vienna has become a sick society, he takes measures to restore it to health. First the Duke brings in a strict deputy, Lord Angelo, to purge the city of its license by enforcing the laws against vice. Then, once Angelo falls victim to the very evils he is seeking to eradicate, the Duke works behind the scenes to prevent the now corrupt Deputy from going too far. In the process he allows several characters to experience what might appear to be unnecessary torment; but in each case the suffering proves medicinal, "a physic/That's bitter to sweet end."

## II

The Duke's ministrations begin with Angelo. When this young man is summoned to court in

the opening scene, it is not completely clear just what the Duke's intentions are. Perhaps significantly, in the BBC production when the Duke asks Escalus what he thinks about the idea of turning over all power to Angelo, Escalus pauses before saying

> If any in Vienna be of worth
> To undergo such ample grace and honor,
> It is Lord Angelo. (I, i: 22–24)

The camera gives us a long look at Angelo as he enters, as if to offer us a hint that we should be sizing him up. And Angelo's nervousness upon receiving the Duke's commission indicates that he is both surprised and apprehensive upon learning of his new responsibilities. When we next see the Duke, upon his entry into the monastery as a "friar," we learn that he has selected Angelo because this young lord is "precise" and will probably enforce justice with more rigor than the Duke has in recent years. At the same time, however, the Duke suggests a second objective that may be just as important as the first: to see "if power change purpose, what our seemers be."

Our initial impressions support the expectation that Angelo will be true to his name, a man of such high standards that he is unwilling to tolerate even the smallest deviation from absolute perfection. Despite indications that Escalus believes him to be unduly severe, Angelo condemns Claudio to die for an offense that ap-





pears to amount to little more than a technicality; and it is only because of his impatience with the incompetence of the constable Elbow that Angelo leaves the courtroom before two low-life characters, Froth and Pompey, can be found guilty of some "good cause" to be whipped. Meanwhile, both with Escalus and later with Isabella, when she comes at Lucio's urging to plead for Claudio, Angelo seems impervious to the notion that justice should be tempered with mercy when circumstances warrant less than the strictest penalty. To Escalus's observation that the judge should bear in mind his own "affections" and "blood," Angelo replies, " 'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,/Another thing to fall" (II, i: 17–18). To Isabella's plea that he put himself in Claudio's position and imagine how he would fare before the highest judge of all, Angelo says, "It is the law, not I, condemn your brother" (II, ii: 81). Thinking himself to be without fault, Angelo is confident that he can enforce the law with unvarying justice and that in doing so he will be demanding no more of his fellow citizens than he expects of himself.

But suddenly he feels promptings that are new to him. Words that are meant in all innocence—"Go to your bosom" and "I'll bribe you" —evoke thoughts that are far from innocent. By the end of his first conversation with Isabella, Angelo knows something that others are unaware of: that he is *not* "a man whose blood/

Is very snow-broth; one who never feels/The wanton stings and motions of the sense" (I, iv: 57–59). Angelo's first reaction to his untoward thoughts is a mixture of astonishment and self-doubt. Can this be Angelo? Or are these temptations the work of our "cunning enemy," the devil?

By the time Isabella returns for her second visit, Angelo is beginning to sound like Claudio: "heaven hath my empty words,/Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue,/Anchors on Isabel" (II, iv: 3–4). Now he is so far gone that he can only give his "sensual race the rein." He therefore offers Isabella his proposition for a "foul redemption," and when she refuses he becomes so agitated that in this production he seems on the verge of raping her.

From this point Angelo's course is steadily downward. We learn that after his assignation with the woman he supposes to be Isabella, he nevertheless sends orders that Claudio be executed. Had Claudio lived, Angelo says, he "might in the times to come have ta'en revenge." Here Angelo's overriding preoccupation with security reminds us of Macbeth's frenzied efforts to eliminate everyone in Scotland who may be in a position to expose and unseat him. And the concluding lines in Angelo's speech—"Alack, when once our grace we have forgot,/Nothing goes right! We would, and we would not!" (IV, iv: 33–34)—echo one of the most familiar passages





in the New Testament. Meditating on the impossibility of living up to the full demands of the law of God and suggesting that one purpose of the law, indeed, is to make man aware of his own unworthiness, the Apostle Paul says,

> For I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
> (Romans 7:18–24)

Like Paul, though without yet realizing it, Angelo's very zeal in abiding by and enforcing the law has made him a forfeit of the law. Sin, "that it might appear sin," has worked death in him "by that which is good" (Romans 7:13; cf. II, ii: 163–75), with the result that, unless he be delivered, Angelo is now subject to condemnation by the same commandment that led him to order the execution of Claudio.

All of this becomes clear in the concluding trial scene. For a while there it appears that Angelo may escape the charges that are brought against him by Isabella and Mariana. But once the "Friar's" habit is removed to disclose the all-watchful Duke, Angelo recognizes that his crimes can no longer be denied. He therefore begs "immediate sentence then, and sequent death." The pardon that follows is effectual only

because the Deputy is now so truly penitent that he cannot even bring himself to sue for mercy. So far as he knows, his order for Claudio's execution has been carried out and justice now demands "An Angelo for Claudio! death for death!" The Angelo we see at the moment he receives the Duke's forgiveness is both a wiser and a better man than the untested innocent the Duke summoned at the beginning of the play. His has been a "felix culpa" or happy fault. And we have reason to be confident that his new bride Mariana speaks aptly when she says that "best men are molded out of faults."

## III

But if Angelo undergoes a fortunate fall, something of the same may be said of Isabella. When we see her for the first time in I, iv—entering a spiritually demanding holy order and yet "wishing a more strict restraint"—she seems remarkably similar to Angelo. Like the Deputy, Isabella is an absolutist, and one of the things that makes their confrontation so dramatic is that both characters are so unyielding in their commitment to principle. Angelo stands for Law; Isabella stands for Mercy. He maintains that any clemency would nullify the power of law, and that the responsible magistrate most shows pity when he enforces the laws with unvarying justice. She reminds him that "all the souls that were were forfeit





once;/And He that might the vantage best have took/ Found out the remedy" (II, ii: 74–76). Whereupon he begins to meditate upon the "remedy" he will propose to her in their next meeting: if Isabella will sleep with Angelo, her brother will be set free. Isabella, of course, is astonished at the Deputy's proposition, and so are we. And she is certainly correct to reply that "Ignomy in ransom and free pardon/Are of two houses" (II, iv: 110–11). Given her premises—"Better it were a brother died at once/Than that a sister, by redeeming him,/Should die forever" (II, iv: 105–107)—Isabella's logic is unassailable. But we are surely meant to question at least her tone, if not her priorities, when at the end of the scene she says "More than our brother is our chastity."

We next see Isabella at her brother's prison cell, earnestly doing her best "to fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest." That this is a worthy enterprise we know from the "Friar's" own ministrations prior to Isabella's arrival. He tells Claudio to "be absolute for death" and provides counsel that draws heavily on the conventions of both the *contemptus mundi* and the *memento mori* traditions. By the time Isabella enters, Claudio is reconciled to his fate, and her first words are clearly meant to reinforce the sage advice the Friar has been offering. We should not fail to observe, however, that the language Isabella employs is somewhat suspect. Instead

of telling Claudio that he must be executed, she offers an evasive euphemism: "Lord Angelo, having affairs to heaven,/Intends you for his swift ambassador" (III, i: 56–57). And to be sure that Claudio doesn't find it tempting "to conserve a life/In base appliances" (III, i: 87–88), she suggests that all he has to counterpoise "a perpetual honor" is a "feverous life" of at most "six or seven winters" more. Predictably, after first saying "O heavens! it cannot be!" and "Thou shalt not do't," Claudio begins to ponder precisely what the anxious Isabella has been trying to keep him from thinking about—the fact that "Death is a fearful thing" and that as for the Deputy's remedy, "If it were damnable, he being so wise,/Why would he for the momentary trick/Be perdurably fined?" (III, i: 112–114). By this point Isabella realizes that even her brother would have her go to bed with Angelo, and she shouts the most passionate words of the play: "Is't not a kind of incest to take life /From thine own sister's shame ? . . . Die, perish! . . . I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,/No word to save thee" (III, i: 138–146).

Clearly Isabella doesn't really mean all that she says here. She is shocked that Claudio has failed to adhere to her high standards of nobility, but she still loves her brother (though not, perhaps, as much as she loves her chastity), and she quickly assents to the substitute "remedy" proposed by the "Friar," who has overheard her





conversation with Claudio. It is a plan similar to that which secured a husband for Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well,* and if it proves effectual, it will compel Angelo to recompense Mariana for the wrong he has done her; "and here, by this, is your brother saved, your honor untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt deputy scaled." (III, i: 253–55)

From this moment on in the action, Isabella is an obedient servant to the "Friar." She returns to the Deputy with her "consent" to sleep with him; she accompanies the "Friar" to the moated grange to meet with Mariana; and once she learns that Angelo has ordered Claudio's execution despite the remedy, she and Mariana follow the "Friar's" instructions and await the returning Duke at the gates to the city. There, believing her brother to be dead, she cries out for "justice, justice, justice, justice!" and accuses Angelo of having both defrauded her honor and reneged on his promise to spare Claudio. The Duke pretends to believe that Isabella and Mariana are either mad or the tools of "someone" who "hath set you on." In "ripened time," however, Isabella's "patience" is rewarded, and the "Friar's" unmasking exposes Angelo for what he has become.

This sets the stage for Isabella's final test. Once Angelo has confessed his crimes and been wed to Mariana, the Duke pronounces sentence: "We do condemn thee to the very block/Where

Claudio stoop'd to death, and with like haste" (V, i: 416–17). Not desiring to be mocked with a husband, Mariana pleads for mercy. Seeing that her suit is unavailing, she then implores "Sweet Isabel, take my part." The Duke interjects that

> Against all sense you do importune her.
> Should she kneel down in mercy of this fact,
> Her brother's ghost his pavèd bed would break
> And take her hence in horror. (V, i: 435–38)

Isabella is now faced with an impossible choice. She has every reason to insist on justice, if not revenge (and the Duke's imagery is surely intended to alert the audience to the potential for an outcome characteristic of revenge tragedy), and her counselor himself is seemingly urging her to give Angelo measure for measure. Yet she herself has advocated mercy in her earlier interchange with the Deputy, and now the woman who has helped Isabella preserve her chastity is pleading for her help. After one of the most dramatic pauses in all of Shakespeare, Isabella kneels and asks for Angelo's pardon on the only basis that would preserve the law and yet spare the would-be lawbreaker:

> Let him not die. My brother had but justice,
> In that he did the thing for which he died.
> For Angelo,
> His act did not o'ertake his bad intent,
> And must be buried but as an intent
> That perished by the way. (V, i: 450–55)





Here it might seem that Isabella is simply reiterating her earlier choice and declining to be her brother's keeper. One way of interpreting her remarks is to see her as affirming that it was all right for Angelo to execute Claudio so long as he was prevented from violating Isabella's chastity. But the BBC production makes it evident that the Isabella who spares Angelo has come a long way from the Isabella who was willing to "kill Claudio" in Act III. By maintaining earlier in the scene that "after much debatement,/My sisterly remorse confutes mine honor, /And I did yield to him" (V, i; 99–101), Isabella has shown that by this point in the play, her chastity—or at least her reputation for chastity—is less important to her than her desire that the injustice against her brother be rectified. But now she is asked to determine what, if anything, is to be gained by demanding yet another execution in order to achieve that rectification. She is asked, in effect, to assume "the top of judgment" with Angelo's life, and after thinking it over, she responds with the same kind of charity that she asked Angelo to manifest in II, ii. In other words, Isabella rises to the occasion by showing to Angelo the compassion that both he and she have earlier failed to show to Claudio.

Her reward, typical of Shakespearean comedy, is to receive back the brother she had believed lost. The "Friar" has known all along that, through "an accident that heaven provides,"

Claudio has been spared. But he has determined to keep Isabella "ignorant of her good,/ To make her heavenly comforts of despair/ When it is least expected" (IV, iii: 110–112). In what is one of the most moving scenes in this production of *Measure for Measure*, Claudio is brought in hooded, revealed to Isabella, and reunited with the Juliet who had thought herself a grieving widow. This embrace is a wondrous moment of reconciliation and reunion that harks back to the "resurrection" of Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and a moment that looks forward to the miraculous restorations that occur in such late romances as *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*. It completes the transformation of potential tragedy into divine comedy, and in this production it prepares us to accept even so unexpected a turn as the Duke's proposal to Isabella: "and, for your lovely sake,/Give me your hand and say you will be mine,/He is my brother too" (V, i: 493–95).

## IV

There is, of course, much more to be said about this play—its relationship to other treatments of "the old law" and "the new law," for example (as in *The Merchant of Venice*), or its relationship to Shakespeare's earlier deployment of the bed-trick in *All's Well That Ends Well* (where, as in *Measure for Measure*, the audience





is sometimes left to wonder why the aggrieved woman would want to win the priggish young man in the first place). There are questions about the proper relationship between erotic love (which gets characters such as Claudio and Juliet into trouble but which motivates Mariana to sacrifice herself to win, and thereby save, Angelo) and brotherly love (which prompts Isabella first to plead for Claudio's life and then to intercede to save the life of the man she believes to have been her brother's executioner), and about the relationship between these kinds of love and the paternal, forgiving, provident love by means of which the Duke reminds us of the gracious Father depicted in the New Testament. There is the question of how we should respond to the scenes depicting the drinking, gambling, prostitution, and other criminal activity in the city—of what we should make of the Duke's release of a hardened criminal like Barnardine when the whole purpose of the ruler's initial departure was, presumably, to restore civic discipline. And there is the much-debated issue of whether the denouement of the play abrogates the rule of law or simply places it in the context of an order of grace that puts earthly justice under the sway of a divine law whose highest expression is to be found in the Sermon on the Mount.

Much is to be gained from considering the

relevance of the passage from which the play's title is taken:

> Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (Matthew 7:1–2)

Does eye-for-eye justice—measure for measure—finally apply in *Measure for Measure*? Or does measure in the classical Greek sense have some bearing on what happens—measure as the mean between two extremes that should be avoided? And to the extent that the rule of law is sustained in *Measure for Measure,* does the action of the play suggest that it can be upheld by human agency alone?

These are but a few of the questions that this splendid play evokes. There are scores of others, as indicated by the wealth of commentary the play has elicited. But surely one of the most promising ways of approaching these and other questions is by viewing and re-viewing the superb production of *Measure for Measure* that provides the occasion for this analysis of Shakespeare's tragicomedy. In the immortal words of Elbow (II, i: 188–89), "Thou art to continue."

—JOHN F. ANDREWS
Editor, *Shakespeare Quarterly*



# King Lear

Executive Producer ..... Shaun Sutton
Director ..... Jonathan Miller

CAST
*(In Order of Appearance)*

Earl of Kent ..... John Shrapnel
Earl of Gloucester ..... Norman Rodway
Edmund ..... Michael Kitchen
King Lear ..... Michael Hordern
Goneril ..... Gillian Barge
Cordelia ..... Brenda Blethyn
Regan ..... Penelope Wilton
Duke of Albany ..... John Bird
Duke of Cornwall ..... Julian Curry
Duke of Burgundy ..... David Weston
King of France ..... Harry Waters
Edgar ..... Anton Lesser
Oswald ..... John Grillo
Fool ..... Frank Middlemass