

Isabella's shut lips: an answer to the duke's proposal in measure for measure

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

At the beginning of Act V, one will see Isabella kneeling and pleading in front of the Duke to render her mercy and justice. She asked him to consider and hear her complaints first before judging her in front of the spectators. Angelo insists that she shouldn't be heard for she has lost her mind. But Isabella persisted that she in a sound mind and should be heard by the Duke.

The Duke agreed with Angelo's assertions and acknowledged to the possibility of Isabella being insane " By mine honesty,/If she be mad,--as I believe no other,--/Her madness hath the oddest frame of sense,/Such a dependency of thing on thing,/As e'er I heard in madness (Shakespeare 114).

" Here we see that he (the duke) already mistrusted Isabella on their first meeting even before Isabella could speak her mind. He favored Angelo's assertions over her confessions. He trusted Angelo, the man that caused her suffering, over her.

The initial reaction of the Duke towards Isabella is not something that a gentleman interested in a certain lady would do. It is an initial display of disregard and apathy towards Isabella's causes and appeals. He could have believed her in the first instance that she speaks of her sanity instead of prompting her more to prove it to everyone in the crowd. He could have treated her more nicely. However, the Duke decided to hear her cause despite his belief that she is insane. He let her state her affairs and her complaints. She said that she is the sister of poor Claudio which was condemned of a crime.

In her desire to save him, she pleaded Angelo to pardon him. However, Angelo abused his superiority and implored her to sacrifice her virginity for

the sake of her brother. She agreed to it but still Angelo prosecuted her brother. In this event, the Duke mistrusted Isabella one more time. He asserted that it is impossible for Angelo to do that for " By heaven, fond wretch, thou knowest not what thou speak'st,/Or else thou art suborn'd against his honour in hateful practise. /First, his integrity/Stands without blemish (Shakespeare 117). " He fervently believed that Angelo is not the kind of person that was described by Isabella.

Furthermore, he accused Isabella of dishonesty and implored her to reveal the truth. He accused her of being advised by someone to stain the morality of Angelo " Confess the truth, and say by whose advice/Thou camest here to complain (Shakespeare 117). " In this case, the Duke showed his favoritism for Angelo by defending his integrity and morality in front of the spectators. He could have scrutinized the pieces of evidence first before judging in favor of Angelo. He could have given Isabella a chance to support her claims and complaints instead of mistrusting and misjudging her right away.

Moreover, he asked the guards to send her to prison. Immediately after Isabella aired her complaints, he immediately dismissed them as fallacious and immediately asked her to be sent to prison. He claimed and justified this so as to free the people from her scandals and her influence. He deemed it necessary for her to be taken away from the crowd. " I know you'ld fain be gone. An officer! /To prison with her! Shall we thus permit/A blasting and a scandalous breath to fall/On him so near us? /This needs must be a practise. /Who knew of Your intent and coming hither? Shakespeare 117). " But while the Duke permitted Isabella to present a witness to support her

claims in the name of Friar Lodowick. But even before he agreed to let him testify, he doubted the possibility of a Friar having known the woman and would actually defend and take her away from the misfortune that befallen her. Furthermore, he spoke ill of Isabella by calling her a "wretched woman". "Words against me? this is a good friar, belike! /And to set on this wretched woman here/Against our substitute! /Let this friar be found (Shakespeare 118). "

The last dialogue of the Duke was about thanking everyone for their assistance and guidance in the resolution of the problem that they were confronting. "Thanks, good friend Escalus, for thy much goodness:/There's more behind that is more grate. /Thanks, provost, for thy care and secrecy:/We shall employ thee in a worthier place (Shakespeare 135). " Right after that the Duke then asked Isabella to marry him. Dear Isabel, I have a motion much imports your good; Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline, What's mine is yours and what is yours is mine. So, bring us to our palace; where we'll show

What's yet behind, that's meet you all should know (Shakespeare 135)

However, Shakespeare eliminated the possibility of the Duke being bluntly rejected by Isabella. I believe Isabella would have rejected the offer of the Duke. First, she is still nursing a broken heart from the death of her brother. Second, she is planned to be in a nunnery and anyone who plans to be a nun doesn't have marriage in their vocabularies. Third, there is no indication or hint that Isabella was ever interested in either the Friar nor the Duke. She

did not reveal any clue for us to infer that Isabella has fallen in-love to either of those personas.

And lastly, the Duke has not treated her well enough for her to feel that his proposal is not an impulsive and therefore sincere. As stated in the arguments above, the Duke's treatment towards Isabella is not something that deserved a " yes" from her. He treated her without sympathy and care which every man who wishes to marry a woman should do. The proposal was done in a spur-of-the-moment manner. Aside from treating her severely, the Duke have not in any way showed Isabella that he's interested in her and that he wanted her to be his wife. His proposal is not something that is to be deemed sincere and genuine. Isabella deserves more.