

FRIAR, 4.1

BEGIN HERE:

LEONATO

Confirmed, confirmed! O, that is stronger made
Which was before barred up with ribs of iron!
Would the two princes lie and Claudio lie,
Who loved her so that, speaking of her foulness,
Washed it with tears? Hence from her. Let her die! 150

FRIAR Hear me a little,
For I have only silent been so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady. I have marked
A thousand blushing apparitions 155
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes,
And in her eye there hath appeared a fire
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. ~~Call me a fool,~~
~~Trust not my reading nor my observations,~~
~~Which with experimental seal doth warrant~~
~~The tenor of my book;~~ Trust not my age, 160
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

END HERE AND SKIP TO NEXT SECTION.

LEONATO Friar, it cannot be.
Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left 165
Is that she will not add to her damnation
A sin of perjury. ~~She not denies it.~~
~~Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse~~
~~That which appears in proper nakedness?~~

FRIAR

Lady, what man is he you are accused of?

HERO

They know that do accuse me. I know none.
If I know more of any man alive 170

FRIAR

Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse. That is some good.
~~But not for that dream I on this strange course,~~
~~But on this travail look for greater birth.~~
She, dying, as it must be so maintained,
~~Upon the instant that she was accused,~~
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excused 200
Of every hearer. For it so falls out
That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lacked and lost,
Why then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not show us 205
Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio.
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
Th' idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life 210
Shall come appareled in more precious habit,
~~More moving, delicate, and full of life,~~
~~Into the eye and prospect of his soul,~~
Than when she lived indeed. Then shall he mourn,
If ever love had interest in his liver,
And wish he had not so accused her,
No, though he thought his accusation true. 215
Let this be so, and doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape
Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
~~But if all aim but this be leveled false,~~
~~The supposition of the lady's death~~
~~Will quench the wonder of her infamy.~~
~~And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,~~
~~As best befits her wounded reputation,~~
~~In some reclusive and religious life,~~
~~Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.~~