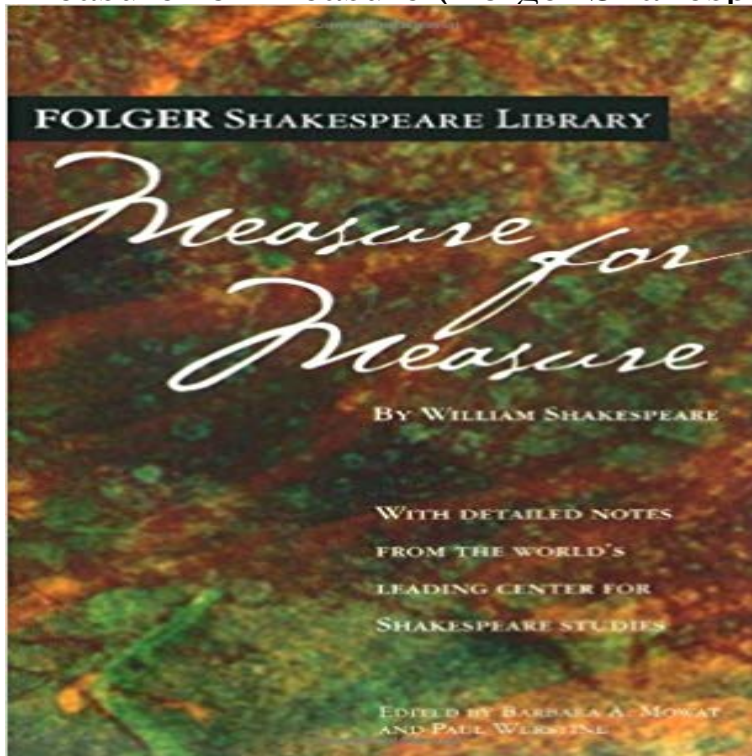


Measure for Measure (Folger Shakespeare Library)



Measure for Measure is among the most passionately discussed of Shakespeares plays. In it, a duke temporarily removes himself from governing his city-state, deputizing a member of his administration, Angelo, to enforce the laws more rigorously. Angelo chooses as his first victim Claudio, condemning him to death because he impregnated Juliet before their marriage. Claudios sister Isabella, who is entering a convent, pleads for her brothers life. Angelo attempts to extort sex from her, but Isabella preserves her chastity. The duke, in disguise, eavesdrops as she tells her brother about Angelos behavior, then offers to ally himself with her against Angelo. Modern responses to the play show how it can be transformed by its reception in present culture to evoke continuing fascination. To some, the duke (the government) seems meddling; to others, he is properly imposing moral standards. Angelo and Isabellas encounter exemplifies sexual harassment. Others see a womans right to control her body in Isabellas choice between her virginity and her brothers life. The authoritative edition of Measure for Measure from The Folger Shakespeare Library, the trusted and widely used Shakespeare series for students and general readers, includes:

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Essay by Christy Desmet
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