

*Enter DOGBERRY and VERGES with the Watch*

**DOGBERRY**

Are you good men and true?

**VERGES**

Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

**DOGBERRY**

Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

**VERGES**

Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

**DOGBERRY**

First, who think you the most desertless man to be constable?

**First Watchman**

Hugh Otecake, sir, or George Seacole; for they can write and read.

**DOGBERRY**

Come hither, neighbour Seacole. God hath blessed you with a good name: to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature.

**Second Watchman**

Both which, master constable,--

**DOGBERRY**

You have: I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore bear you the lantern. This is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.

**Second Watchman**

How if a' will not stand?

**DOGBERRY**

Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together and thank God you are rid of a knave.

**VERGES**

If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

**DOGBERRY**

True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and to talk is most tolerable and not to be endured.

**Watchman**

We will rather sleep than talk: we know what belongs to a watch.

**DOGBERRY**

Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman; for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: only, have a care that your bills be not stolen. Well, you are to call at all the ale-houses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

**Watchman**

How if they will not?

**DOGBERRY**

Why, then, let them alone till they are sober: if they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

**Watchman**

Well, sir.

**DOGBERRY**

If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why the more is for your honesty.

**Watchman**

If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

**DOGBERRY**

Truly, by your office, you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defiled: the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him show himself what he is and steal out of your company.

**VERGES**

You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

**DOGBERRY**

Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him.