DOGBERRY (To first watchman)
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.

First Watchman
How if he 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.

Second 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.

Third 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.

Second 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.

First 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. Well, masters, good night: an there be
any matter of weight chances, call up me: keep your
fellows' counsels and your own; and good night.
Come, neighbour.

Exit Dogberry and Verges

First Watchman
Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit here
upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed.

Enter Dogberry and Verges

DOGBERRY
One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you watch
about Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being
there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night.
Adieu: be vigilant, I beseech you.