

# **The Revenger's Tragedy**

Thomas Middleton



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# The Revenger's Tragedy

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### Thomas Middleton

[Dramatis Personae in order of appearance  
VINDICI, the revenger, sometimes disguised as Piato  
HIPPOLITO, his brother  
GRATIANA, his mother  
CASTIZA, his sister  
DUKE  
Two JUDGES  
DUCHESS  
LUSSURIOSO, the Duke's son by a previous marriage  
AMBITIOSO, the eldest of the Duchess's three sons by a previous marriage  
SPURIO, the Duke's bastard son  
JUNIOR, the Duchess's youngest son  
SUPERVACUO, the Duchess's middle son  
ANTONIO, a virtuous old lord  
PIERO, a virtuous lord  
DONDOLO, Castiza's servant  
LORDS  
Two SERVANTS of Spurio  
NOBLES  
Four prison OFFICERS  
A prison KEEPER  
GENTLEMEN  
NENCIO }  
SORDIDO } Lussurioso's attendants  
A FOURTH MAN in the final masque, Ambitioso's henchman  
Guards]

I.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

Enter Vindici [with a skull]; the Duke, Duchess, Lussurioso [his] son, Spurio the bastard, with a train pass over the stage with torchlight.

**VINDICI**

Duke, royal lecher, go, gray-hair'd adultery;  
And thou his son, as impious steep'd as he;  
And thou his bastard, true-begot in evil;  
And thou his duchess that will do with [the] devil:  
Four ex'lent characters. Oh, that marrowless age  
Would stuff the hollow bones with damn'd desires,  
And stead of heat kindle infernal fires  
Within the spendthrift veins of a dry duke,  
A parch'd and juiceless luxur! Oh God, one  
That has scarce blood enough to live upon!  
And he to riot it like a son and heir?  
Oh, the thought of that  
Turns my abused heartstrings into fret!  
Thou sallow picture of my poisoned love,  
My study's ornament, thou shell of death,  
Once the bright face of my betrothed lady,  
When life and beauty naturally fill'd out  
These ragged imperfections,  
When two heaven-pointed diamonds were set  
In those unsightly rings: then 'twas a face  
So far beyond the artificial shine  
Of any woman's bought complexion  
That the uprightest man, if such there be,  
That sin but seven times a day, broke custom  
And made up eight with looking after her.  
Oh, she was able to ha' made a usurer's son  
Melt all his patrimony in a kiss,  
And what his father fifty years told  
To have consum'd, and yet his suit been cold!  
But oh, accursed palace!  
Thee, when thou wert apparel'd in thy flesh,  
The old duke poison'd,  
Because thy purer part would not consent  
Unto his palsy-lust, for old men lustful  
Do show like young men angry, eager-violent,  
Outbid like their limited performances.  
Oh, 'ware an old man hot and vicious!  
"Age, as in gold, in lust is covetous."  
Vengeance, thou murder's quit-rent, and whereby  
Thou shouldst thyself tenant to tragedy,  
Oh, keep thy day, hour, minute, I beseech,  
For those thou hast determin'd! Hum: whoe'er knew  
Murder unpaid? Faith, give revenge her due:

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Sh'as kept touch hitherto. Be merry, merry;  
Advance thee, O thou terror to fat folks,  
To have their costly three-pil'd flesh worn of  
As bare as this: for banquets, ease, and laughter  
Can make great men, as greatness goes by clay,  
But wise men little are more great than they.

Enter [his] brother Hippolito.

### **HIPPOLITO**

Still sighing o'er death's vizard?

### **VINDICI**

Brother, welcome;  
What comfort bringst thou? How go things at court?

### **HIPPOLITO**

In silk and silver, brother; never braver.

### **VINDICI**

Puh,  
Thou play'st upon my meaning. Prithee say,  
Has that bald madam, opportunity,  
Yet thought upon's? Speak, are we happy yet?  
Thy wrongs and mine are for one scabbard fit.

### **HIPPOLITO**

It may prove happiness.

### **VINDICI**

What is't may prove?  
Give me to taste.

### **HIPPOLITO**

Give me your hearing then.  
You know my place at court.

### **VINDICI**

Ay, the duke's chamber.  
But 'tis a marvel thou'rt not turn'd out yet!

### **HIPPOLITO**

Faith, I have been shov'd at, but 'twas still my hap  
To hold by th' duchess' skirt. You guess at that;  
Whom such a coat keeps up can ne'er fall flat.  
But to the purpose.  
Last evening predecessor unto this,  
The duke's son warily enquir'd for me,  
Whose pleasure I attended: he began  
By policy to open and unhusk me  
About the time and common rumour;

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

But I had so much wit to keep my thoughts  
Up in their built houses, yet afforded him  
An idle satisfaction without danger.  
But the whole aim and scope of his intent  
Ended in this: conjuring me in private  
To seek some strange–digested fellow forth  
Of ill–contented nature, either disgrac'd  
In former times, or by new grooms displac'd  
Since his stepmother's nuptials, such a blood  
A man that were for evil only good;  
To give you the true word, some base–coin'd pander.

### VINDICI

I reach you, for I know his heat is such:  
Were there as many concubines as ladies  
He would not be contain'd, he must fly out.  
I wonder how ill–featur'd, vild–proportion'd  
That one should be, if she were made for woman,  
Whom at the insurrection of his lust  
He would refuse for once. Heart, I think none,  
Next to a skull, tho' more unsound than one:  
Each face he meets he strongly dotes upon.

### HIPPOLITO

Brother, y'ave truly spoke him.  
He knows not you, but I'll swear you know him.

### VINDICI

And therefore I'll put on that knave for once,  
And be a right man then, a man a' th' time,  
For to be honest is not to be i' th' world.  
Brother, I'll be that strange–composed fellow.

### HIPPOLITO

And I'll prefer you, brother.

### VINDICI

Go to then;  
The small'st advantage fattens wronged men,  
It may point out. Occasion, if I meet her,  
I'll hold her by the foretop fast enough,  
Or like the French mole heave up hair and all.  
I have a habit that will fit it quaintly.

[Enter Gratiana and Castiza.]

Here comes our mother.

### HIPPOLITO

And sister.



## The Revenger's Tragedy

### VINDICI

We must coin.  
Women are apt, you know, to take false money,  
But I dare stake my soul for these two creatures,  
Only excuse excepted that they'll swallow  
Because their sex is easy in belief.

### [GRATIANA]

What news from [court], son Carlo?

### HIPPOLITO

Faith, Mother,  
'Tis whisper'd there the duchess' youngest son  
Has play'd a rape on Lord Antonio's wife.

### [GRATIANA]

On that religious lady!

### CASTIZA

Royal blood!  
Monster, he deserves to die,  
If Italy had no more hopes but he.

### VINDICI

Sister, y'ave sentenc'd most direct and true:  
The law's a woman, and would she were you.  
Mother, I must take leave of you.

### [GRATIANA]

Leave for what?

### VINDICI

I intend speedy travel.

### HIPPOLITO

That he does, madam.

### [GRATIANA]

Speedy indeed!

### VINDICI

For since my worthy father's funeral,  
My life's unnatural to me, e'en compell'd  
As if I liv'd now when I should be dead.

### [GRATIANA]

Indeed he was a worthy gentleman,  
Had his estate been fellow to his mind.

### VINDICI

The duke did much deject him.

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

**[GRATIANA]**

Much?

**VINDICI**

Too much.

And through disgrace oft smother'd in his spirit  
When it would mount, surely I think he died  
Of discontent, the nobleman's consumption.

**[GRATIANA]**

Most sure he did!

**VINDICI**

Did he? 'Lack, you know all;  
You were his midnight secretary.

**[GRATIANA]**

No.

He was too wise to trust me with his thoughts.

**VINDICI**

I'faith then, father, thou wast wise indeed:  
"Wives are but made to go to bed and feed."  
Come mother, sister; you'll bring me onward, brother?

**HIPPOLITO**

I will.

**VINDICI**

[Aside to him] I'll quickly turn into another.

Exeunt.

[I.ii. A court of law]

Enter the old Duke, Lussurioso his son, the Duchess, the Bastard, the Duchess' two sons Ambitioso and Supervacuo, the third her youngest brought out with Officers for the rape, two Judges.

**DUKE**

Duchess, it is your youngest son; we're sorry.  
His violent act has e'en drawn blood of honour  
And stain'd our honours,  
Thrown ink upon the forehead of our state,  
Which envious spirits will dip their pens into  
After our death and blot us in our tombs,  
For that which would seem treason in our lives  
Is laughter when we're dead: who dares now whisper  
That dares not then speak out, and e'en proclaim,  
With loud words and broad pens our closest shame?

I.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### **[FIRST] JUDGE**

Your grace hath spoke like to your silver years  
Full of confirmed gravity, for what is it to have  
A flattering false insculption on a tomb,  
And in men's hearts' reproach? The bowell'd corpse  
May be cer'd in, but with free tongue I speak,  
"The faults of great men through their [cerecloths] break."

### **DUKE**

They do, we're sorry for't; it is our fate:  
To live in fear and die to live in hate.  
I leave him to your sentence; doom him, lords,  
The fact is great, whilst I sit by and sigh.

### **DUCHESS**

My gracious lord, I pray be merciful.  
Although his trespass far exceed his years,  
Think him to be your own as I am yours;  
Call him not son-in-law. The law I fear  
Will fall too soon upon his name and him;  
Temper his fault with pity.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Good my lord,  
Then 'twill not taste so bitter and unpleasant  
Upon the judge's palate, for offenses  
Gilt o'er with mercy show like fairest women,  
Good only for their beauties, which wash'd of,  
No sin is uglier.

### **AMBITIOSO**

I beseech your grace,  
Be soft and mild: let not relentless law,  
Look with an iron forehead on our brother.

### **SPURIO**

He yields small comfort yet; hope he shall die,  
And if a bastard's wish might stand in force,  
Would all the court were turn'd into a corse.

### **DUCHESS**

No pity yet? Must I rise fruitless then?  
A wonder in a woman. Are my knees  
Of such low metal that without respect--

### **FIRST JUDGE**

Let the offender stand forth.  
'Tis the duke's pleasure that impartial doom  
Shall take [fast] hold of his unclean attempt.  
A rape! Why, 'tis the very core of lust,  
Double adultery!

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### **JUNIOR**

So, sir.

### **SECOND JUDGE**

And which was worse,  
Committed on the Lord Antonio's wife,  
That general honest lady. Confess, my lord!  
What mov'd you to't?

### **JUNIOR**

Why, flesh and blood, my lord.  
What should move men unto a woman else?

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Oh, do not jest thy doom; trust not an axe  
Or sword too far: the law is a wise serpent  
And quickly can beguile thee of thy life.  
Tho' marriage only has [made] thee my brother,  
I love thee so far; play not with thy death.

### **JUNIOR**

I thank you, troth; good admonitions, faith,  
If I'd the grace now to make use of them.

### **FIRST JUDGE**

That lady's name has spread such a fair wing  
Over all Italy, that if our tongues  
Were sparing toward the fact, judgment itself  
Would be condemned and suffer in men's thoughts.

### **JUNIOR**

Well then, 'tis done, and it would please me well  
Were it to do again: sure [she's] a goddess,  
For I'd no power to see her and to live.  
It falls out true in this, for I must die:  
Her beauty was ordain'd to be my scaffold.  
And yet [methinks] I might be easier [cess'd],  
My fault being sport, let me but die in jest.

### **FIRST JUDGE**

This be the sentence.

### **DUCHESS**

Oh, keep 't upon your tongue; let it not slip:  
Death too soon steals out of a lawyer's lip.  
Be not so cruel—wise.

### **FIRST JUDGE**

Your grace must pardon us;  
'Tis but the justice of the law.

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### **DUCHESS**

The law  
Is grown more subtle than a woman should be.

### **SPURIO**

[Aside] Now, now he dies; rid 'em away.

### **DUCHESS**

[Aside] Oh, what it is to have an old, cool duke,  
To be as slack in tongue as in performance!

### **FIRST JUDGE**

Confirm'd; this be the doom irrevocable.

### **DUCHESS**

Oh!

### **FIRST JUDGE**

Tomorrow early—

### **DUCHESS**

Pray be a-bed, my lord.

### **FIRST JUDGE**

Your grace much wrongs yourself.

### **AMBITIOSO**

No, 'tis that tongue,  
Your too much right, does do us too much wrong.

### **FIRST JUDGE**

Let that offender—

### **DUCHESS**

Live, and be in health.

### **FIRST JUDGE**

Be on a scaffold—

### **DUKE**

Hold, hold, my lord.

### **SPURIO**

[Aside] Pax on't,  
What makes my dad speak now?

### **DUKE**

We will defer the judgment till next sitting.  
In the meantime let him be kept close prisoner:  
Guard, bear him hence.

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

[Ambitioso and Supervacuo take Junior aside.]

### **AMBITIOSO**

Brother, this makes for thee;  
Fear not, we'll have a trick to set thee free.

### **JUNIOR**

Brother, I will expect it from you both,  
And in that hope I rest.

### **SUPERVACUO**

Farewell, be merry.

Exit [Junior] with a guard.

### **SPURIO**

[Aside] Delay'd, deferr'd! Nay, then if judgment have cold blood,  
Flattery and bribes will kill it.

### **DUKE**

About it then, my lords, with your best powers;  
More serious business calls upon our hours.

Exeunt [omnes]. Manet Duchess.

### **DUCHESS**

Wast ever known step-duckess was so mild  
And calm as I? Some now would plot his death  
With easy doctors, those loose-living men,  
And make his wither'd grace fall to his grave  
And keep church better.  
Some second wife would do this, and dispatch  
Her double-loath'd lord at meat and sleep.  
Indeed, 'tis true an old man's twice a child.  
Mine cannot speak; one of his single words  
Would quite have freed my youngest, dearest son  
From death or durance, and have made him walk  
With a bold foot upon the thorny law,  
Whose prickles should bow under him: but 'tis not,  
And therefore wedlock, faith, shall be forgot.  
I'll kill him in his forehead; hate there feed:  
That wound is deepest tho' it never bleed.

[Enter Spurio.]

[Aside] And here comes he whom my heart points unto,  
His bastard son, but my love's true-begot.  
Many a wealthy letter have I sent him,  
Swell'd up with jewels, and the timorous man  
Is yet but coldly kind;

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

That jewel's mine that quivers in his ear,  
Mocking his master's chillness and vain fear.  
H'as spied me now.

### **SPURIO**

Madam? Your grace so private?  
My duty on your hand.

[He kisses her hand.]

### **DUCHESS**

Upon my hand, sir! Troth, I think you'd fear  
To kiss my hand too if my lip stood there.

### **SPURIO**

Witness I would not, madam.

### **DUCHESS**

Tis a wonder,  
For ceremony [has] made many fools.  
It is as easy way unto a duchess  
As to a hatted dame, if her love answer,  
But that by timorous honours, pale respects,  
Idle degrees of fear, men make their ways  
Hard of themselves. What have you thought of me?

### **SPURIO**

Madam, I ever think of you in duty,  
Regard, and—

### **DUCHESS**

Puh, upon my love, I mean!

### **SPURIO**

I would 'twere love, but ['t 'as] a fouler name  
Than lust; you are my father's wife: your grace may guess now  
What I could call it.

### **DUCHESS**

Why, th'art his son but falsely;  
'Tis a hard question whether he begot thee.

### **SPURIO**

I'faith, 'tis true too; I'm an uncertain man,  
Of more uncertain woman. Maybe his groom  
A' th' stable begot me; you know I know not.  
He could ride a horse well; a shrewd suspicion, marry!  
He was wondrous tall; he had his length, i'faith,  
For peeping over half shut holy-day windows:  
Men would desire him light! When he was afoot,  
He made a goodly show under a penthouse,

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

And when he rid, his hat would check the signs  
And clatter barbers' basins.

### **DUCHESS**

Nay, set you a-horseback once,  
You'll ne'er light off.

### **SPURIO**

Indeed, I am a beggar.

### **DUCHESS**

That's more the sign thou art great. But to our love:  
Let it stand firm both in thought and mind.  
That the duke was thy father, as no doubt then  
He bid fair for't, thy injury is the more,  
For had he cut thee a right diamond,  
Thou hadst been next set in the dukedom's ring  
When his worn self like age's easy slave  
Had dropp'd out of the collet into th' grave.  
What wrong can equal this? Canst thou be tame  
And think upon't?

### **SPURIO**

No, mad and think upon't!

### **DUCHESS**

Who would not be reveng'd of such a father,  
E'en in the worst way? I would thank that sin  
That could most injury him and be in league with it.  
Oh, what a grief 'tis, that a man should live  
But once i' th' world, and then to live a bastard,  
The curse a' the womb, the thief of nature,  
Begot against the seventh commandment,  
Half-damn'd in the conception, by the justice  
Of that unbribed, everlasting law!

### **SPURIO**

Oh, I'd a hot-back'd devil to my father!

### **DUCHESS**

Would not this mad e'en patience, make blood rough?  
Who but an eunuch would not sin, his bed  
By one false minute disinherited?

### **SPURIO**

Ay, there's the vengeance that my birth was wrapp'd in;  
I'll be reveng'd for all. Now hate begin;  
I'll call foul incest but a venial sin.

### **DUCHESS**

Cold still? In vain then must a duchess woo?

I.i. [Outside Vindici's house]



## The Revenger's Tragedy

### SPURIO

Madam, I blush to say what I will do.

### DUCHESS

Thence flew sweet comfort, earnest and farewell.

[She kisses him.]

### SPURIO

Oh, one incestuous kiss picks open hell!

### DUCHESS

[Aside] Faith, now, old duke, my vengeance shall reach high;  
I'll arm thy brow with woman's heraldry.

Exit.

### SPURIO

Duke, thou didst do me wrong, and by thy act  
Adultery is my nature.  
Faith, if the truth were known, I was begot  
After some gluttonous dinner; some stirring dish  
Was my first father. When deep healths went round,  
And ladies' cheeks were painted red with wine,  
Their tongues as short and nimble as their heels,  
Uttering words sweet and thick, and when they [rose]  
Were merrily dispos'd to fall again:  
In such a whisp'ring and withdrawing hour,  
When base male-bawds kept sentinel at stair-head,  
Was I stol'n softly. Oh, damnation met  
The sin of feasts, drunken adultery!  
I feel it swell me; my revenge is just:  
I was begot in impudent wine and lust.  
Stepmother, I consent to thy desires;  
I love thy mischief well, but I hate thee  
And those three cubs, thy sons, wishing confusion,  
Death, and disgrace may be their epitaphs.  
As for my brother, the duke's only son,  
Whose birth is more beholding to report  
Than mine, and yet perhaps as falsely sown—  
Women must not be trusted with their own—  
I'll loose my days upon him: hate all I.  
Duke, on thy brow I'll draw my bastardy,  
For indeed a bastard by nature should make cuckolds,  
Because he is the son of a cuckold-maker.

Exit.

[I.iii. The palace]

I.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Enter Vindici and Hippolito, Vindici in disguise [as Piato] to attend Lord Lussurioso, the duke's son.

### VINDICI

What, brother? Am I far enough from myself?

### HIPPOLITO

As if another man had been sent  
Into the world, and none wist how he came.

### VINDICI

It will confirm me bold, the child a' th' court:  
Let blushes dwell i' th' country. Impudence,  
Thou goddess of the palace, [mistress] of [mistresses]  
To whom the costly—perfum'd people pray,  
Strike thou my forehead into dauntless marble,  
Mine eyes to steady sapphires: turn my visage,  
And if I must needs glow, let me blush inward  
That this immodest season may not spy  
That scholar in my cheeks, fool—bashfulness,  
That maid in the old time, whose flush of grace  
Would never suffer her to get good clothes.  
Our maids are wiser and are less asham'd;  
Save grace the bawd I seldom hear grace nam'd!

### HIPPOLITO

Nay, brother, you reach out a' th' verge now.

[Enter Lussurioso.]

'Sfoot, the duke's son! Settle your looks.

### VINDICI

Pray let me not be doubted.

### HIPPOLITO

My lord—

### LUSSURIOSO

Hippolito? Be absent; leave us.

### HIPPOLITO

My lord, after long search, wary inquiries  
And politic siftings, I made choice of yon fellow,  
Whom I guess rare for many deep employments;  
This our age swims within him: and if Time  
Had so much hair, I should take him for Time,  
He is so near kin to this present minute.

### LUSSURIOSO

'Tis enough;  
We thank thee. Yet words are but great men's blanks:

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Gold, tho' it be dumb, does utter the best thanks.

[He gives Hippolito gold.]

### **HIPPOLITO**

Your plenteous honour; an ex'lent fellow, my lord.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

So, give us leave.

Exit [Hippolito].

Welcome, be not far off, we must be better acquainted. Push, be bold with us, thy hand!

### **VINDICI**

With all my heart, i'faith. How dost, sweet musk-cat?  
When shall we lie together?

### **LUSSURIOSO**

[Aside] Wondrous knave!  
Gather him into boldness? 'Sfoot, the slave's  
Already as familiar as an ague,  
And shakes me at his pleasure!—Friend, I can  
Forget myself in private, but elsewhere,  
I pray do you remember me.

### **VINDICI**

Oh, very well, sir.  
I conster myself saucy.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

What hast been?  
Of what profession?

### **VINDICI**

A bone-setter.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

A bone-setter!

### **VINDICI**

A bawd, my lord,  
One that sets bones together.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

[Aside] Notable bluntness!  
Fit, fit for me, e'en train'd up to my hand.—  
Thou hast been scrivener to much knavery then?

### **VINDICI**

Fool to abundance, sir. I have been witness

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

To the surrenders of a thousand virgins,  
And not so little;  
I have seen patrimonies wash'd a' pieces,  
Fruit-fields turn'd into bastards,  
And in a world of acres,  
Not so much dust due to the heir 'twas left to  
As would well gravel a petition!

### LUSSURIOSO

[Aside] Fine villain! Troth, I like him wondrously.  
He's e'en shap'd for my purpose.—Then thou know'st  
I' th' world strange lust.

### VINDICI

Oh, Dutch lust! Fulsome lust!  
Drunken procreation, which begets  
So many drunkards! Some father dreads not, gone  
To bed in wine, to slide from the mother  
And cling the daughter-in-law,  
Some uncles are adulterous with their nieces,  
Brothers with brothers' wives. Oh, hour of incest!  
Any kin now next to the rim a' th' sister  
Is man's meat in these days, and in the morning  
When they are up and dress'd, and their mask on,  
Who can perceive this save that eternal eye  
That sees through flesh and all well. If anything be damn'd,  
It will be twelve a' clock at night; that twelve  
Will never 'scape:  
It is the Judas of the hours, wherein  
Honest salvation is betray'd to sin.

### LUSSURIOSO

In troth, it is too; but let this talk glide.  
It is our blood to err, tho' hell gap'd loud:  
Ladies know Lucifer fell, yet still are proud.  
Now, sir. Wert thou as secret as thou'rt subtle,  
And deeply fadom'd into all estates,  
I would embrace thee for a near employment,  
And thou shouldst swell in money, and be able  
To make lame beggars crouch to thee.

### VINDICI

My lord?  
Secret? I ne'er had that disease a' th' mother,  
I praise my father: why are men made close,  
But to keep thoughts in best? I grant you this,  
Tell but some woman a secret overnight,  
Your doctor may find it in the urinal i' th' morning.  
But, my lord—

### LUSSURIOSO

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

So, thou'rt confirmed in me,  
And thus I enter thee.

### VINDICI

This Indian devil  
Will quickly enter any man but a usurer;  
He prevents that by ent'ring the devil first.

### LUSSURIOSO

Attend me: I am past my [depth] in lust  
And I must swim or drown; all my desires  
Are level'd at a virgin not far from court,  
To whom I have convey'd by messenger  
Many wax'd lines, full of my neatest spirit,  
And jewels that were able to ravish her  
Without the help of man, all which and more  
She, foolish-chaste, sent back, the messengers  
Receiving frowns for answers.

### VINDICI

Possible?  
'Tis a rare phoenix, whoe'er she be,  
If your desires be such, she so repugnant.  
In troth, my lord, I'd be reveng'd and marry her.

### LUSSURIOSO

Push, the dowry of her blood and of her fortunes  
Are both too mean, good enough to be bad withal.  
I'm one of that number can defend  
Marriage is good, yet rather keep a friend.  
Give me my bed by stealth; there's true delight:  
What breeds a loathing in't but night by night?

### VINDICI

A very fine religion!

### LUSSURIOSO

Therefore thus:  
I'll trust thee in the business of my heart  
Because I see thee well experienc'd  
In this luxurious day wherein we breathe.  
Go thou, and with a smooth, enchanting tongue  
Bewitch her ears and cozen her of all grace.  
Enter upon the portion of her soul,  
Her honour, which she calls her chastity,  
And bring it into expense, for honesty  
Is like a stock of money laid to sleep,  
Which ne'er so little broke does never keep.

### VINDICI

You have gi'n 't the tang, i'faith, my lord.

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Make known the lady to me, and my brain  
Shall swell with strange invention: I will move it  
Till I expire with speaking, and drop down  
Without a word to save me; but I'll work.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

We thank thee, and will raise thee: receive her name;  
It is the only daughter to Madam Gratiana,  
The late widow.

### **VINDICI**

[Aside] Oh, my sister, my sister!

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Why dost walk aside?

### **VINDICI**

My lord, I was thinking how I might begin,  
As thus, "Oh, lady," or twenty hundred devices;  
Her very bodkin will put a man in.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Ay, or the wagging of her hair.

### **VINDICI**

No, that shall put you in, my lord.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Shall 't? Why, content. Dost know the daughter then?

### **VINDICI**

Oh, ex'lent well by sight.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

That was her brother  
That did prefer thee to us.

### **VINDICI**

My lord, I think so;  
I knew I had seen him somewhere.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

And therefore, prithee, let thy heart to him  
Be as a virgin, close.

### **VINDICI**

Oh, [my] good lord!

### **LUSSURIOSO**

We may laugh at that simple age within him.

The Revenger's Tragedy

**VINDICI**

Ha, ha, ha!

**LUSSURIOSO**

Himself being made the subtle instrument  
To wind up a good fellow.

**VINDICI**

That's I, my lord.

**LUSSURIOSO**

That's thou,  
To entice and work his sister.

**VINDICI**

A pure novice!

**LUSSURIOSO**

'Twas finely manag'd.

**VINDICI**

Gallantly carried.  
[Aside] A pretty, perfum'd villain!

**LUSSURIOSO**

I've bethought me,  
If she prove chaste still and immoveable,  
Venture upon the mother, and with gifts  
As I will furnish thee, begin with her.

**VINDICI**

Oh, fie, fie, that's the wrong end, my lord! 'Tis mere impossible that a mother by any gifts should become a bawd to her own daughter!

**LUSSURIOSO**

Nay, then I see thou'rt but a puny in the subtle mystery of a woman.  
Why, 'tis held now no dainty dish: the name  
Is so in league with age that nowadays  
It does eclipse three quarters of a mother.

**VINDICI**

Dost so, my lord?  
Let me alone then to eclipse the fourth.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Why, well said; come, I'll furnish thee, but first  
Swear to be true in all.

**VINDICI**

True?

## The Revenger's Tragedy

**LUSSURIOSO**

Nay, but swear!

**VINDICI**

Swear?

I hope your honour little doubts my faith.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Yet for my humour's sake, 'cause I love swearing.

**VINDICI**

'Cause you love swearing, 'slud, I will.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Why, enough,

Ere long look to be made of better stuff.

**VINDICI**

That will do well indeed, my lord.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Attend me.

Exit.

**VINDICI**

Oh,

Now let me burst: I've eaten noble poison!

We are made strange fellows, brother, innocent villains.

Wilt not be angry when thou hear'st on't, think'st thou?

I'faith, thou shalt; swear me to foul my sister!

Sword, I durst make a promise of him to thee,

Thou shalt dis-heir him, it shall be thine honour!

And yet now angry froth is down in me,

It would not prove the meanest policy

In this disguise to try the faith of both;

Another might have had the selfsame office,

Some slave that would have wrought effectually,

Ay, and perhaps o'erwrought 'em. Therefore I,

Being thought travell'd, will apply myself

Unto the selfsame form, forget my nature,

As if no part about me were kin to 'em;

So touch 'em, tho' I durst almost for good

Venture my lands in heaven upon their [blood].

Exit.

[I.iv. Antonio's house]

Enter the discontented Lord Antonio, whose wife the Duchess' youngest son ravish'd, he discovering the body of her dead to [Piero and other] certain Lords and Hippolito.

I.i. [Outside Vindici's house]



## The Revenger's Tragedy

### ANTONIO

Draw nearer, lords, and be sad witnesses  
Of a fair, comely building newly fall'n,  
Being falsely undermined: violent rape  
Has play'd a glorious act. Behold, my lords,  
A sight that strikes man out of me.

### PIERO

That virtuous lady?

### ANTONIO

President for wives!

### HIPPOLITO

The blush of many women, whose chaste presence  
Would e'en call shame up to their cheeks,  
And make pale wanton sinners have good colours—

### ANTONIO

Dead!  
Her honour first drunk poison, and her life,  
Being fellows in one house, did pledge her honour.

### PIERO

Oh, grief of many!

### ANTONIO

I mark'd not this before.  
A prayer book the pillow to her cheek,  
This was her rich confection, and another  
Plac'd in her right hand, with a leaf tuck'd up,  
Pointing to these words:  
"Melius virtute mori, quam per dedecus vivere."  
True and effectual it is indeed.

### HIPPOLITO

My lord, since you invite us to your sorrows,  
Let's truly taste 'em, that with equal comfort  
As to ourselves we may relieve your wrongs;  
We have grief too that yet walks without tongue:  
*Curae leves loquuntur, majores stupent.*

### ANTONIO

You deal with truth, my lord.  
Lend me but your attentions, and I'll cut  
Long grief into short words: last revelling night,  
When torch-light made an artificial noon  
About the court, some courtiers in the masque,  
Putting on better faces than their own,  
Being full of fraud and flattery, amongst whom

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

The duchess' youngest son, that moth to honour,  
Fill'd up a room, and with long lust to eat  
Into my wearing, amongst all the ladies,  
Singled out that dear form, who ever liv'd  
As cold in lust as she is now in death,  
Which that step-*duchess'* monster knew too well;  
And therefore in the height of all the revels,  
When music was hard loudest, courtiers busiest,  
And ladies great with laughter. Oh, vicious minute!  
Unfit but for relation to be spoke of!  
Then with a face more impudent than his vizard,  
He harried her amidst a throng of panders,  
That live upon damnation of both kinds,  
And fed the ravenous vulture of his lust!  
Oh, death to think on't! She, her honour forc'd,  
Deem'd it a nobler dowry for her name  
To die with poison than to live with shame.

### HIPPOLITO

A wondrous lady; of rare fire compact:  
Sh'as made her name an empress by that act.

### PIERO

My lord, what judgment follows the offender?

### ANTONIO

Faith, none, my lord: it cools and is deferr'd.

### PIERO

Delay the doom for rape?

### ANTONIO

Oh, you must note who 'tis should die:  
The Duchess' son; she'll look to be a saver.  
"Judgment in this age is ne'er kin to favour."

### HIPPOLITO

[Drawing his sword] Nay, then step forth, thou bribeless officer.  
I bind you all in steel to bind you surely:  
Here let your oaths meet to be kept and paid,  
Which else will stick like rust and shame the blade.  
Strengthen my vow, that if at the next sitting  
Judgment speak all in gold, and spare the blood  
Of such a serpent, e'en before their seats,  
To let his soul out, which long since was found  
Guilty in heaven.

### ALL [LORDS]

We swear it and will act it.

### ANTONIO

l.i. [Outside Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Kind gentlemen, I thank you in mine ire.

### **HIPPOLITO**

'Twere pity  
The ruins of so fair a monument  
Should not be dipp'd in the defacer's blood.

### **PIERO**

Her funeral shall be wealthy, for her name  
Merits a tomb of pearl. My Lord Antonio,  
For this time wipe your lady from your eyes;  
No doubt our grief and yours may one day court it,  
When we are more familiar with revenge.

### **ANTONIO**

That is my comfort, gentlemen, and I joy  
In this one happiness above the rest,  
Which will be call'd a miracle at last,  
That being an old man I'd a wife so chaste.

Exeunt.

The Revenger's Tragedy

**II.i. [Vindici's house]**

Enter Castiza the sister.

**CASTIZA**

How hardly shall that maiden be beset  
Whose only fortunes are her constant thoughts,  
That has no other child's part but her honour  
That keeps her low and empty in estate.  
Maids and their honours are like poor beginners:  
Were not sin rich there would be fewer sinners.  
Why had not virtue a revenue? Well,  
I know the cause: 'twould have impoverish'd hell.

Enter Dondolo.

How now, Dondolo?

**DONDOLO**

[Madonna], there is one, as they say, a thing of flesh and blood, a man I take him by his beard, that would very desirously mouth to mouth with you.

**CASTIZA**

What's that?

**DONDOLO**

Show his teeth in your company.

**CASTIZA**

I understand thee not.

**DONDOLO**

Why, speak with you, Madonna!

**CASTIZA**

Why, say so, madman, and cut of a great deal of dirty way. Had it not been better spoke in ordinary words that one would speak with me?

**DONDOLO**

Ha, ha, that's as ordinary as two shillings! I would strive a little to show myself in my place: a gentleman usher scorns to use the phrase and fancy of a serving-man.

**CASTIZA**

Yours be your [own], sir; go direct him hither.

[Exit Dondolo.]

I hope some happy tidings from my brother  
That lately travell'd, whom my soul affects.

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Enter [Vindici] her brother disguised [as Piato].

Here he comes.

**VINDICI**

[Giving her a jewel] Lady, the best of wishes to your sex,  
Fair skins and new gowns.

**CASTIZA**

Oh, they shall thank you, sir.  
Whence this?

**VINDICI**

Oh, from a dear and worthy friend, mighty!

**CASTIZA**

From whom?

**VINDICI**

The duke's son!

**CASTIZA**

Receive that!

A box a' th' ear to her brother.

I swore I'd put anger in my hand  
And pass the virgin limits of myself  
To him that next appear'd in that base office  
To be his sin's attorney; bear to him  
That figure of my hate upon thy cheek  
Whilst 'tis yet hot, and I'll reward thee for't.  
Tell him my honour shall have a rich name  
When several harlots shall share his with shame.  
Farewell; commend me to him in my hate!

Exit.

**VINDICI**

It is the sweetest box  
That e'er my nose came nigh,  
The finest drawn-work cuff that e'er was worn.  
I'll love this blow forever, and this cheek  
Shall still hence forward take the wall of this.  
Oh, I'm above my tongue! Most constant sister,  
In this thou hast right honourable shown;  
Many are call'd by their honour that have none.  
Thou art approv'd forever in my thoughts.  
It is not in the power of words to taint thee,  
And yet for the salvation of my oath,

II.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

As my resolve in that point, I will lay  
Hard siege unto my mother, tho' I know  
A siren's tongue could not bewitch her so.

[Enter Gratiana.]

[Aside] Mass, fity here she comes; thanks, my disguise.—  
Madam, good afternoon.

**[GRATIANA]**

Y'are welcome, sir.

**VINDICI**

The next of Italy commends him to you,  
Our mighty expectation, the duke's son.

**[GRATIANA]**

I think myself much honour'd that he pleases  
To rank me in his thoughts.

**VINDICI**

So may you, lady:  
One that is like to be our sudden duke;  
The crown gapes for him every tide, and then  
Commander o'er us all. Do but think on him;  
How bless'd were they now that could pleasure him  
E'en with anything almost.

**[GRATIANA]**

Ay, save their honour.

**VINDICI**

Tut, one would let a little of that go too  
And ne'er be seen in't: ne'er be seen [in't], mark you;  
I'd wink and let it go.

**[GRATIANA]**

Marry, but I would not.

**VINDICI**

Marry, but I would I hope; I know you would too,  
If you'd that blood now which you gave your daughter.  
To her indeed 'tis this wheel comes about:  
That man that must be all this, perhaps ere morning,  
For his white father does but mould away,  
Has long desir'd your daughter.

**[GRATIANA]**

Desir'd?

**VINDICI**

Il.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Nay, but hear me:  
He desires now that will command hereafter.  
Therefore be wise; I speak as more a friend  
To you than him. Madam, I know y'are poor  
And 'lack the day, there are too many poor ladies already:  
Why should you vex the number? 'Tis despis'd.  
Live wealthy, rightly understand the world,  
And chide away that foolish country girl  
Keeps company with your daughter, chastity.

**[GRATIANA]**

Oh, fie, fie,  
The riches of the world cannot hire  
A mother to such a most unnatural task!

**VINDICI**

No, but a thousand angels can:  
Men have no power; angels must work you to't.  
The world descends into such base-born evils  
That forty angels can make fourscore devils.  
There will be fools still, I perceive, still [fools].  
Would I be poor, dejected, scorn'd of greatness,  
Swept from the palace, and see other daughters  
Spring with the dew a' th' court, having mine own  
So much desir'd and lov'd by the duke's son?  
No, I would raise my state upon her breast  
And call her eyes my tenants; I would count  
My yearly maintenance upon her cheeks,  
Take coach upon her lip, and all her parts  
Should keep men after men, and I would ride  
In pleasure upon pleasure.  
You took great pains for her, once when it was;  
Let her requite it now, tho' it be but some:  
You brought her forth; she may well bring you home.

**[GRATIANA]**

Oh, heavens! This overcomes me.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] Not, I hope, already?

**[GRATIANA]**

It is too strong for me; men know that know us:  
We are so weak their words can overthrow us.  
He touch'd me nearly, made my virtues bate  
When his tongue struck upon my poor estate.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] I e'en quake to proceed; my spirit turns edge.  
I fear me she's unmother'd, yet I'll venture:  
"That woman is all male whom none can enter."—

II.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

What think you now, lady? Speak, are you wiser?  
What said advancement to you? Thus it said:  
The daughter's fall lifts up the mother's head.  
Did it not, madam? But I'll swear it does  
In many places; tut, this age fears no man:  
"'Tis no shame to be bad, because 'tis common."

**[GRATIANA]**

Ay, that's the comfort on't.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] The comfort on't!—

[Giving her gold] I keep the best for last: can these persuade you  
To forget heaven and—

**[GRATIANA]**

Ay, these are they—

**VINDICI**

[Aside] Oh!

**[GRATIANA]**

That enchant our sex; these are the means  
That govern our affections. That woman  
Will not be troubled with the mother long  
That sees the comfortable shine of you;  
I blush to think what for your sakes I'll do!

**VINDICI**

[Aside] Oh, suff'ring heaven, with thy invisible finger  
E'en at this instant turn the precious side  
Of both mine eye-balls inward, not to see myself!

**[GRATIANA]**

Look you, sir.

**VINDICI**

Holla.

**[GRATIANA]**

[Giving him gold] Let this thank your pains.

**VINDICI**

Oh, you're a kind [madam].

**[GRATIANA]**

I'll see how I can move.

**VINDICI**

Your words will sting.



## The Revenger's Tragedy

**[GRATIANA]**

If she be still chaste I'll ne'er call her mine.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] Spoke truer than you meant it.

Enter Castiza.

**[GRATIANA]**

Daughter Castiza.

**CASTIZA**

Madam.

**VINDICI**

Oh, she's yonder.

Meet her.

[Aside] Troops of celestial soldiers guard her heart;

Yon dam has devils enough to take her part.

**CASTIZA**

Madam, what makes yon evil-offic'd man

In presence of you?

**[GRATIANA]**

Why?

**CASTIZA**

He lately brought

Immodest writing sent from the duke's son

To tempt me to dishonourable act.

**[GRATIANA]**

Dishonourable act? Good honourable fool,

That wouldst be honest 'cause thou wouldst be so,

Producing no one reason but thy will.

And 't 'as a good report, prettily commended,

But pray by whom? Mean people, ignorant people;

The better sort I'm sure cannot abide it.

And by what rule should we square out our lives

But by our betters actions? Oh, if thou knew'st

What 'twere to lose it, thou would never keep it!

But there's a cold curse laid upon all maids:

Whilst other[s] clip the sun, they clasp the shades!

Virginity is paradise, lock'd up.

You cannot come by yourselves without fee,

And 'twas decreed that man should keep the key!

Deny advancement, treasure, the duke's son!

**CASTIZA**

I cry you mercy. Lady, I mistook you.

II.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Pray did you see my mother? Which way went you?  
Pray God I have not lost her.

### VINDICI

[Aside] Prettily put by.

### [GRATIANA]

Are you as proud to me as coy to him?  
Do you not know me now?

### CASTIZA

Why, are you she?  
The world's so chang'd, one shape into another:  
It is a wise child now that knows her mother.

### VINDICI

[Aside] Most right, i'faith.

### [GRATIANA]

I owe your cheek my hand  
For that presumption now, but I'll forget it.  
Come, you shall leave those childish 'haviours  
And understand your time; fortunes flow to you.  
What, will you be a girl?  
If all fear'd drowning that spy waves ashore,  
Gold would grow rich and all the merchants poor.

### CASTIZA

It is a pretty saying of a wicked one, but methinks now  
It does not show so well out of your mouth,  
Better in his.

### VINDICI

[Aside] Faith, bad enough in both,  
Were I in earnest, as I'll seem no less.--  
I wonder, lady, your own mother's words  
Cannot be taken, nor stand in full force.  
'Tis honesty you urge. What's honesty?  
'Tis but heavens beggar,  
And what woman is so foolish to keep honesty,  
And be not able to keep herself? No,  
Times are grown wiser and will keep less charge:  
A maid that has small portion now intends  
To break up house and live upon her friends.  
How bless'd are you; you have happiness alone:  
Others must fall to thousands, you to one,  
Sufficient in himself to make your forehead  
Dazzle the world with jewels, and petitionary people  
Start at your presence.

### [GRATIANA]

Il.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Oh, if I were young,  
I should be ravish'd!

### CASTIZA

Ay, to lose your honour.

### VINDICI

'Slid, how can you lose your honour  
To deal with my lord's grace?  
He'll add more honour to it by his title;  
Your mother will tell you how.

### [GRATIANA]

That I will.

### VINDICI

Oh, think upon the pleasure of the palace:  
Secured ease and state, the stirring meats,  
Ready to move out of the dishes,  
That e'en now quicken when they're eaten,  
Banquets abroad by torch-light, musics, sports,  
Bare-headed vassals that had ne'er the fortune  
To keep on their own hats but let horns [wear] 'em,  
Nine coaches waiting. Hurry, hurry, hurry!

### CASTIZA

Ay, to the devil.

### VINDICI

[Aside] Ay, to the devil!--To th' duke, by my faith.

### [GRATIANA]

Ay, to the duke: daughter, you'd scorn to think  
A' th' devil and you were there once.

### VINDICI

True, for most  
There are as proud as he for his heart, i'faith.  
Who'd sit at home in a neglected room,  
Dealing her short-liv'd beauty to the pictures  
That are as useless as old men, when those  
Poorer in face and fortune than herself  
Walk with a hundred acres on their backs,  
Fair meadows cut into green foreparts? Oh,  
It was the greatest blessing ever happened to women  
When farmers' sons agreed, and met again,  
To wash their hands and come up gentlemen;  
The commonwealth has flourish'd ever since.  
Lands that were [mete] by the rod, that labours spar'd:  
Tailors ride down, and measure 'em by the yard.  
Fair trees, those comely foretops of the field,

II.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Are cut to maintain head–tires, much untold.  
All thrives but chastity; she lies a–cold.  
Nay, shall I come nearer to you? Mark but this:  
Why are there so few honest women but  
Because 'tis the poorer profession?  
That's accounted best that's best followed:  
Least in trade, least in fashion,  
And that's not honesty. Believe it, and do  
But note the [low] and dejected price of it:  
"Lose but a pearl, we search and cannot brook it,  
But that once gone, who is so mad to look it?"

**[GRATIANA]**

Troth, he says true.

**CASTIZA**

False! I defy you both!  
I have endur'd you with an ear of fire;  
Your tongues have struck hot irons on my face!  
Mother, come from that poisonous woman there.

**[GRATIANA]**

Where?

**CASTIZA**

Do you not see her? She's too inward then.  
Slave, perish in thy office! You heavens, please  
Henceforth to make the mother a disease,  
Which first begins with me, yet I've outgone you.

Exit.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] Oh angels, clap your wings upon the skies,  
And give this virgin crystal plaudities!

**[GRATIANA]**

Peevish, coy, foolish! But return this answer:  
My lord shall be most welcome when his pleasure  
Conducts him this way. I will sway mine own;  
Women with women can work best alone.

**VINDICI**

Indeed, I'll tell him so.

Exit.

Oh, more uncivil, more unnatural,  
Than those base–titled creatures that look downward!  
Why does not heaven [turn] black, or with a frown  
Undo the world? Why does not earth start up

Il.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

And strike the sins that tread upon't? Oh,  
Wert not gold and women, there would be no damnation;  
Hell would look like a lord's great kitchen without fire in't!  
But 'twas decreed before the world began  
That they should be the hooks to catch at man.

Exit.

[II.ii. The palace]

Enter Lussurioso with Hippolito, Vindici's brother.

### LUSSURIOSO

I much applaud thy judgment; thou art well-read in a fellow,  
And 'tis the deepest art to study man.  
I know this, which I never learnt in schools:  
The world's divided into knaves and fools.

### HIPPOLITO

[Aside] Knave in your face, my lord, behind your back.

### LUSSURIOSO

And I much thank thee that thou hast preferr'd  
A fellow of discourse, well-mingled,  
And whose brain time hath season'd.

### HIPPOLITO

True, my lord.

[Aside] We shall find season once I hope. Oh, villain,  
To make such an unnatural slave of me! But--

[Enter Vindici, disguised as Piato.]

### LUSSURIOSO

Mass, here he comes.

### HIPPOLITO

[Aside] And now shall I have free leave to depart.

### LUSSURIOSO

Your absence; leave us.

### HIPPOLITO

[Aside] Are not my thoughts true?  
I must remove; but brother, you may stay:  
Heart, we are both made bawds a new-found way!

Exit.

### LUSSURIOSO

Now we're an even number; a third man's dangerous,

II.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Especially her brother. Say, be free:  
Have I a pleasure toward?

### VINDICI

Oh, my lord!

### LUSSURIOSO

Ravish me in thine answer. Art thou rare?  
Hast thou beguil'd her of salvation,  
And rubb'd hell o'er with honey? Is she a woman?

### VINDICI

In all but in desire.

### LUSSURIOSO

Then she's in nothing;  
I bate in courage now.

### VINDICI

The words I brought,  
Might well have made indifferent-honest naught.  
A right good woman in these days is chang'd  
Into white money with less labour far:  
Many a maid has turn'd to Mahomet  
With easier working. I durst undertake  
Upon the pawn and forfeit of my life  
With half those words to flat a Puritan's wife,  
But she is close and good. Yet 'tis a doubt  
By this time: oh, the mother, the mother!

### LUSSURIOSO

I never thought their sex had been a wonder  
Until this minute. What fruit from the mother?

### VINDICI

[Aside] Now must I blister my soul, be forsworn,  
Or shame the woman that receiv'd me first.  
I will be true; thou liv'st not to proclaim:  
Spoke to a dying man, shame has no shame.--  
My lord.

### LUSSURIOSO

Who's that?

### VINDICI

Here's none but I, my lord.

### LUSSURIOSO

What would thy haste utter?

### VINDICI

Il.i. [Vindici's house]

The Revenger's Tragedy

Comfort.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Welcome.

**VINDICI**

The maid being dull, having no mind to travel  
Into unknown lands, what did me straight  
But set spurs to the mother; golden spurs  
Will put her to a false gallop in a trice.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Is't possible that in this  
The mother should be damn'd before the daughter?

**VINDICI**

Oh, that's good manners, my lord; the mother  
For her age must go foremost, you know.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Thou'st spoke that true! But where comes in this comfort?

**VINDICI**

In a fine place, my lord. The unnatural mother  
Did with her tongue so hard beset her honour  
That the poor fool was struck to silent wonder,  
Yet still the maid like an unlighted taper  
Was cold and chaste, save that her mothers breath  
Did blow fire on her [cheeks]; the girl departed,  
But the good, ancient madam half-mad threw me  
These promising words, which I took deeply note of:  
"My lord shall be most welcome"---

**LUSSURIOSO**

Faith, I thank her.

**VINDICI**

"When his pleasure conducts him this way"---

**LUSSURIOSO**

That shall be soon, i'faith.

**VINDICI**

"I will sway mine own"---

**LUSSURIOSO**

She does the wiser; I commend her for't.

**VINDICI**

"Women with women can work best alone."

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### LUSSURIOSO

By this light, and so they can. Give 'em their due;  
Men are not comparable to 'em.

### VINDICI

No,  
That's true, for you shall have one woman knit  
More in a hour than any man can ravel  
Again in seven and twenty year.

### LUSSURIOSO

Now my  
Desires are happy, I'll make 'em freemen now.  
Thou art a precious fellow; faith, I love thee.  
Be wise and make it thy revenue: beg, leg!  
What office couldst thou be ambitious for?

### VINDICI

Office, my lord? Marry, if I might have my wish  
I would have one that was never begg'd yet.

### LUSSURIOSO

Nay, then thou canst have none.

### VINDICI

Yes, my lord,  
I could pick out another office yet,  
Nay, and keep a horse and drab upon't.

### LUSSURIOSO

Prithee, good bluntness, tell me.

### VINDICI

Why I would desire but this,  
My lord: to have all the fees behind the arras,  
And all the farthingales that fall plump  
About twelve a' clock at night upon the rushes.

### LUSSURIOSO

Thou'rt a mad, apprehensive knave.  
Dost think to make any great purchase of that?

### VINDICI

Oh, 'tis an unknown thing,  
My lord; I wonder 't 'as been miss'd so long.

### LUSSURIOSO

Well, this night I'll visit her, and 'tis till then  
A year in my desires. Farewell, attend,  
Trust me with thy preferment.



## The Revenger's Tragedy

### VINDICI

My lov'd lord!

Exit.

Oh, shall I kill him a' th' wrong side now? No.  
Sword, thou wast never a back-biter yet.  
I'll pierce him to his face; he shall die looking upon me.  
Thy veins are swell'd with lust; this shall unfill 'em:  
Great men were gods if beggars could not kill 'em.  
Forgive me, heaven, to call my mother wicked;  
Oh, lessen not my days upon the earth!  
I cannot honour her; by this I fear me  
Her tongue has turn'd my sister into use.  
I was a villain not to be forsworn  
To this our lecherous hope, the duke's son,  
For lawyers, merchants, some divines and all  
Count beneficial perjury a sin small.  
It shall go hard yet, but I'll guard her honour  
And keep the ports sure.

Enter Hippolito.

### HIPPOLITO

Brother, how goes the world? I would know news of you,  
But I have news to tell you.

### VINDICI

What, in the name of knavery?

### HIPPOLITO

Knavery? Faith,  
This vicious old duke's worthily abus'd:  
The pen of his bastard writes him cuckold!

### VINDICI

His bastard?

### HIPPOLITO

Pray, believe it: he and the duchess  
By night meet in their linen; they have been seen  
By stair-foot panders!

### VINDICI

Oh, sin foul and deep,  
Great faults are wink'd at when the duke's asleep!

[Enter Spurio and his two Servants, one whispering to him.]

See, see, here comes the Spurio.

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### HIPPOLITO

Monstrous luxur!

### VINDICI

Unbrac'd, two of his valiant bawds with him.  
Oh, there's a wicked whisper; hell is in his ear!  
Stay, let's observe his passage.

[They retire.]

### SPURIO

Oh, but are you sure on't?

### [FIRST] SERVANT

My lord, most sure on't, for 'twas spoke by one  
That is most inward with the duke's son's lust,  
That he intends within this hour to steal  
Unto Hippolito's sister, whose chaste life  
The mother has corrupted for his use.

### SPURIO

Sweet world, sweet occasion! Faith, then, brother  
I'll disinherit you in as short time,  
As I was when I was begot in haste:  
I'll damn you at your pleasure: precious deed  
After your lust; oh, 'twill be fine to bleed!  
Come, let our passing out be soft and wary.

Exeunt [Spurio and Servants].

### VINDICI

Mark, there, there, that step! Now to the duchess:  
This their second meeting writes the duke cuckold  
With new additions, his horns newly reviv'd.  
Night, thou that lookst like funeral heralds' fees  
Torn down betimes i' th' morning, thou hang'st fitly  
To grace those sins that have no grace at all.  
Now 'tis full sea a-bed over the world;  
There's juggling of all sides. Some that were maids  
E'en at sunset are now perhaps i' th' toll-book:  
This woman in immodest, thin apparel  
Lets in her friend by water; here a dame  
Cunning nails leather hinges to a door,  
To avoid proclamation.  
Now cuckolds are a-coining, apace, apace, apace, apace;  
And careful sisters spin that thread i' th' night  
That does maintain them and their bawds i' th' day!

### HIPPOLITO

You flow well, brother.

The Revenger's Tragedy

**VINDICI**

Puh, I'm shallow yet,  
Too sparing and too modest. Shall I tell thee?  
If every trick were told that's dealt by night,  
There are few here that would not blush outright.

**HIPPOLITO**

I am of that belief too.

Enter Lussurioso.

**VINDICI**

[Aside to Hippolito] Who's this comes?  
The duke's son up so late! Brother, fall back,  
And you shall learn some mischief.—My good lord.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Piato! Why, the man I wish'd for. Come,  
I do embrace this season for the fittest  
To taste of that young lady.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] Heart and hell!

**HIPPOLITO**

[Aside] Damn'd villain!

**VINDICI**

[Aside] I ha' no way now to cross it but to kill him.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Come, only thou and I.

**VINDICI**

My lord, my lord.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Why dost thou start us?

**VINDICI**

I'd almost forgot: the bastard!

**LUSSURIOSO**

What of him?

**VINDICI**

This night, this hour, this minute, now!

**LUSSURIOSO**

What! What!

The Revenger's Tragedy

**VINDICI**

Shadows the duchess---

**LUSSURIOSO**

Horrible word.

**VINDICI**

And like strong poison eats  
Into the duke your father's forehead.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Oh!

**VINDICI**

He makes horn royal.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Most ignoble slave!

**VINDICI**

This is the fruit of two beds.

**LUSSURIOSO**

I am mad!

**VINDICI**

That passage he trod warily.

**LUSSURIOSO**

He did!

**VINDICI**

And hush'd his villains every step he took.

**LUSSURIOSO**

His villains! I'll confound them!

**VINDICI**

Take 'em finely, finely now.

**LUSSURIOSO**

The duchess' chamber-door shall not control me.

[Exeunt Lussurioso and Vindici.]

**HIPPOLITO**

Good, happy, swift; there's gunpowder i' th' court,  
Wildfire at midnight in this heedless fury.  
He may show violence to cross himself;  
I'll follow the event.

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Exit.

[II.iii. The Duke's bedchamber]

[The Duke and Duchess are discovered in bed. Lussurioso and Vindici] enter again [with Hippolito following].

**LUSSURIOSO**

Where is that villain?

**VINDICI**

Softly, my lord, and you may take 'em twisted.

**LUSSURIOSO**

I care not how!

**VINDICI**

Oh, 'twill be glorious

To kill 'em doubled, when they're heap'd! Be soft, my lord.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Away! My [spleen] is not so lazy; thus and thus  
I'll shake their eyelids ope, and with my sword  
Shut 'em again forever.

[He draws his sword and approaches the bed.]

Villain, strumpet!

**DUKE**

You upper guard defend us!

**DUCHESS**

Treason, treason!

**DUKE**

Oh, take me not in sleep; I have great sins: I must have days,  
Nay, months, dear son, with penitential heaves  
To lift 'em out and not to die unclear!  
Oh, thou wilt kill me both in heaven and here!

**LUSSURIOSO**

I am amaz'd to death.

**DUKE**

Nay, villain traitor,  
Worse than the foulest epithet, now I'll gripe thee  
E'en with the nerves of wrath, and throw thy head  
Amongst the lawyer's! Guard!

Enter Nobles and sons [Ambitioso and Supervacuo, with guards].

II.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### FIRST NOBLE

How comes the quiet of your grace disturb'd?

### DUKE

This boy that should be myself after me  
Would be myself before me, and in heat  
Of that ambition bloodily rush'd in  
Intending to depose me in my bed.

### SECOND NOBLE

Duty and natural loyalty forfend!

### DUCHESS

He call'd his father villain and me strumpet,  
A word that I abhor to 'file my lips with.

### AMBITIOSO

That was not so well done, brother.

### LUSSURIOSO

I am abus'd.  
I know there's no excuse can do me good.

### VINDICI

[Aside to Hippolito] 'Tis now good policy to be from sight;  
His vicious purpose to our sister's honour  
Is cross'd beyond our thought.

### HIPPOLITO

[Aside to Vindici] You little dreamt his father slept here.

### VINDICI

[Aside to Hippolito] Oh, 'twas far beyond me.  
But since it fell so-- Without frightful word,  
Would he had kill'd him, 'twould have eas'd our swords.

### DUKE

Be comforted, our duchess: he shall die.

[The Duchess exits as the guards seize Lussurioso. Vindici and Hippolito] dissemble a flight.

### LUSSURIOSO

Where's this slave-pander now? Out of mine eye,  
Guilty of this abuse.

Enter Spurio with his villains [to one side].

### SPURIO

Y'are villains, fblers;  
You have knaves' chins and harlots' tongues: you lie,  
And I will damn you with one meal a day.

Il.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### FIRST SERVANT

Oh, good my lord!

### SPURIO

'Sblood, you shall never sup.

### SECOND SERVANT

Oh, I beseech you, sir!

### SPURIO

To let my sword catch cold so long and miss him!

### FIRST SERVANT

Troth, my lord, 'twas his intent to meet there.

### SPURIO

Heart, he's yonder!

Ha! What news here? Is the day out a' th' socket

That it is noon at midnight? The court up?

How comes the guard so saucy with his elbows?

### LUSSURIOSO

The bastard here?

Nay, then the truth of my intent shall out.

My lord and father, hear me.

### DUKE

Bear him hence.

### LUSSURIOSO

I can with loyalty excuse.

### DUKE

Excuse? To prison with the villain;

Death shall not long lag after him.

### SPURIO

[Aside] Good, i'faith, then 'tis not much amiss.

### LUSSURIOSO

[To Ambitioso and Supervacuo aside] Brothers, my best release lies on your tongues;

I pray persuade for me.

### AMBITIOSO

It is our duties: make yourself sure of us.

### SUPERVACUO

We'll sweat in pleading.

### LUSSURIOSO

Il.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

And I may live to thank you.

Exeunt [Lussurioso and guards].

### **AMBITIOSO**

[Aside] No, thy death shall thank me better.

### **SPURIO**

He's gone: I'll after him  
And know his trespass, seem to bear a part  
In all his ills, but with a puritan heart.

Exit [with Servants].

### **AMBITIOSO**

[Aside to Supervacuo] Now, brother, let our hate and love be woven  
So subtly together, that in speaking one word for his life,  
We may make three for his death:  
The craftiest pleader gets most gold for breath.

### **SUPERVACUO**

[Aside to Ambitioso] Set on; I'll not be far behind you, brother.

### **DUKE**

Is't possible a son  
Should be disobedient as far as the sword?  
It is the highest; he can go no farther.

### **AMBITIOSO**

My gracious lord, take pity—

### **DUKE**

Pity, boys?

### **AMBITIOSO**

Nay, we'd be loath to move your grace too much;  
We know the trespass is unpardonable,  
Black, wicked, and unnatural.

### **SUPERVACUO**

In a son, oh, monstrous!

### **AMBITIOSO**

Yet, my lord,  
A duke's soft hand strokes the rough head of law  
And makes it lie smooth.

### **DUKE**

But my hand shall ne'er do't.

### **AMBITIOSO**

Il.i. [Vindici's house]



## The Revenger's Tragedy

That as you please, my lord.

### **SUPERVACUO**

We must needs confess  
Some father would have enter'd into hate,  
So deadly pointed, that before his eyes  
He would ha' seen the execution sound  
Without corrupted favour.

### **AMBITIOSO**

But, my lord,  
Your grace may live the wonder of all times  
In pard'ning that offence which never yet  
Had face to beg a pardon.

### **DUKE**

Honey? How's this?

### **AMBITIOSO**

Forgive him, good my lord: he's your own son,  
And I must needs say 'twas the vildlier done.

### **SUPERVACUO**

He's the next heir, yet this true reason gathers:  
None can possess that dispossess their fathers.  
Be merciful—

### **DUKE**

[Aside] Here's no stepmother's wit:  
I'll try 'em both upon their love and hate.

### **AMBITIOSO**

Be merciful, although—

### **DUKE**

You have prevail'd:  
My wrath like flaming wax hath spent itself.  
I know 'twas but some peevish moon in him:  
Go, let him be releas'd.

### **SUPERVACUO**

[Aside to Ambitioso] 'Sfoot, how now, brother?

### **AMBITIOSO**

Your grace doth please to speak beside your spleen;  
I would it were so happy.

### **DUKE**

Why, go, release him.

### **SUPERVACUO**

Il.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Oh, my good lord, I know the fault's too weighty  
And full of general loathing, too inhuman,  
Rather by all men's voices worthy death.

### DUKE

'Tis true too.  
Here then, receive this signet; doom shall pass:  
Direct it to the judges; he shall die  
Ere many days. Make haste.

### AMBITIOSO

All speed that may be.  
We could have wish'd his burthen not so sore;  
We knew your grace did but delay before.

Exeunt [Ambitioso and Supervacuo].

### DUKE

Here's envy with a poor, thin cover o'er 't,  
Like scarlet hid in lawn, easily spied through.  
This their ambition by the mother's side  
Is dangerous, and for safety must be purg'd;  
I will prevent their envies. Sure it was  
But some mistaken fury in our son,  
Which these aspiring boys would climb upon:  
He shall be releas'd suddenly.

Enter Nobles. [They kneel.]

### FIRST NOBLE

Good morning to your grace.

### DUKE

Welcome, my lords.

### SECOND NOBLE

Our knees shall take away the office of our feet forever,  
Unless your grace bestow a father's eye  
Upon the clouded fortunes of your son,  
And in compassionate virtue grant him that  
Which makes e'en mean men happy: liberty.

### DUKE

[Aside] How seriously their loves and honours woo  
For that which I am about to pray them do!—  
Rise, my lords, your knees sign his release:  
We freely pardon him.

### FIRST NOBLE

We owe your grace much thanks, and he much duty.

Il.i. [Vindici's house]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Exeunt [Nobles].

### **DUKE**

It well becomes that judge to nod at crimes  
That does commit greater himself and lives.  
I may forgive a disobedient error  
That expect pardon for adultery,  
And in my old days am a youth in lust:  
Many a beauty have I turn'd to poison  
In the denial, covetous of all.  
Age hot is like a monster to be seen:  
My hairs are white, and yet my sins are green.

[Exit.]

**III.[i. The palace]**

Enter Ambitioso and Supervacuo.

**SUPERVACUO**

Brother, let my opinion sway you once,  
I speak it for the best, to have him die  
Surest and soonest; if the signet come  
Unto the judges' hands, why, then his doom  
Will be deferr'd till sittings and court-days,  
Juries and further. Faiths are bought and sold;  
Oaths in these days are but the skin of gold.

**AMBITIOSO**

In troth, 'tis true too!

**SUPERVACUO**

Then let's set by the judges  
And fall to the officers; 'tis but mistaking  
The duke our father's meaning, and where he nam'd  
"Ere many days," 'tis but forgetting that  
And have him die i' th' morning.

**AMBITIOSO**

Excellent;  
Then am I heir, duke in a minute.

**SUPERVACUO**

[Aside] Nay,  
And he were once puff'd out, here is a pin  
Should quickly prick your bladder.

**AMBITIOSO**

[Bless'd] occasion!  
He being pack'd, we'll have some trick and wile  
To wind our younger brother out of prison  
That lies in for the rape; the lady's dead,  
And people's thoughts will soon be buried.

**SUPERVACUO**

We may with safety do't, and live and feed;  
The duchess' sons are too proud to bleed.

**AMBITIOSO**

We are, i'faith, to say true. Come, let's not linger.  
I'll to the officers; go you before  
And set an edge upon the executioner.

**SUPERVACUO**

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Let me alone to grind him.

### **AMBITIOSO**

Meet; farewell.

Exit [Supervacuo].

I am next now; I rise just in that place  
Where thou'rt cut off: upon thy neck, kind brother.  
The falling of one head lifts up another.

Exit.

[III.ii. Outside the prison]

Enter with the Nobles, Lussurioso from prison.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

My lords, I am so much indebted to your loves  
For this, oh, this delivery!

### **FIRST NOBLE**

But our duties,  
My lord, unto the hopes that grow in you.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

If e'er I live to be myself, I'll thank you.  
Oh liberty, thou sweet and heavenly dame!  
But hell for prison is too mild a name.

Exeunt.

[III.iii. The prison]

Enter Ambitioso and Supervacuo, with Officers.

### **AMBITIOSO**

Officers, here's the duke's signet, your firm warrant,  
Brings the command of present death along with it  
Unto our brother, the duke's son; we are sorry  
That we are so unnaturally employ'd  
In such an unkind office, fitter far  
For enemies than brothers.

### **SUPERVACUO**

But you know,  
The duke's command must be obey'd.

### **FIRST OFFICER**

It must and shall my lord; this morning then.  
So suddenly?

III.[i. The palace]

**AMBITIOSO**

Ay, alas, poor good soul,  
He must breakfast betimes; the executioner  
Stands ready to put forth his cowardly valour.

**SECOND OFFICER**

Already?

**SUPERVACUO**

Already, i'faith. Oh, sir, destruction hies,  
And that is least impudent soonest dies.

**FIRST OFFICER**

Troth, you say true, my lord. We take our leaves;  
Our office shall be sound: we'll not delay  
The third part of a minute.

**AMBITIOSO**

Therein you show  
Yourselves good men and upright officers.  
Pray let him die as private as he may;  
Do him that favour, for the gaping people  
Will but trouble him at his prayers  
And make him curse and swear, and so die black.  
Will you be so far kind?

**FIRST OFFICER**

It shall be done, my lord.

**AMBITIOSO**

Why, we do thank you; if we live to be,  
You shall have a better office.

**SECOND OFFICER**

Your good lordship.

**SUPERVACUO**

Commend us to the scaffold in our tears.

**FIRST OFFICER**

We'll weep and do your commendations.

Exeunt [Officers].

**AMBITIOSO**

Fine fools in office!

**SUPERVACUO**

Things fall out so fit.

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### **AMBITIOSO**

So happily! Come, brother, ere next clock  
His head will be made serve a bigger block.

Exeunt.

[III.iv. Junior brother's cell in the prison]  
Enter in prison Junior brother.

### **JUNIOR**

Keeper.

[Enter the Keeper.]

### **KEEPER**

My lord.

### **JUNIOR**

No news lately from our brothers?  
Are they unmindful of us?

### **KEEPER**

My lord, a messenger came newly in  
And brought this from 'em.

[He hands him a letter.]

### **JUNIOR**

Nothing but paper comforts?  
I look'd for my delivery before this  
Had they been worth their oaths. Prithee be from us.

[Exit the Keeper.]

Now what say you, forsooth? Speak out, I pray.

[Opens and reads the] letter.

"Brother be of good cheer."

'Slud, it begins like a whore with good cheer!

"Thou shalt not be long a prisoner."

Not five and thirty year like a bankrout, I think so.

"We have thought upon a device to get thee out by a trick."

By a trick! Pox a' your trick and it be so long a-playing!

"And so rest comforted, be merry and expect it suddenly."

Be merry, hang merry, draw and quarter merry, I'll be mad!

Is't not strange that a man should lie in a whole month for a woman? Well, we shall see how sudden our brothers will be in their promise. I must expect still a trick! I shall not be long a prisoner!

[Enter the Keeper with four Officers.]

III.[i. The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

How now, what news?

### **KEEPER**

Bad news, my lord; I am discharg'd of you.

### **JUNIOR**

Slave, call'st thou that bad news? I thank you, brothers!

### **KEEPER**

My lord, 'twill prove so; here come the officers  
Into whose hands I must commit you.

### **JUNIOR**

Ha, officers? What, why?

### **FIRST OFFICER**

You must pardon us, my lord;  
Our office must be sound: here is our warrant,  
The signet from the duke; you must straight suffer.

### **JUNIOR**

Suffer? I'll suffer you to be gone, I'll suffer you  
To come no more! What would you have me suffer?

### **SECOND OFFICER**

My lord, those words were better chang'd to prayers;  
The time's but brief with you: prepare to die.

### **JUNIOR**

Sure 'tis not so.

### **THIRD OFFICER**

It is too true, my lord.

### **JUNIOR**

I tell you 'tis not, for the duke my father  
Deferr'd me till next sitting, and I look  
E'en every minute, threescore times an hour,  
For a release, a trick wrought by my brothers.

### **FIRST OFFICER**

A trick, my lord? If you expect such comfort,  
Your hopes as fruitless as a barren woman:  
Your brothers were the unhappy messengers  
That brought this powerful token for your death.

### **JUNIOR**

My brothers? No, no!

### **SECOND OFFICER**

III.[i. The palace]



## The Revenger's Tragedy

'Tis most true, my lord.

### **JUNIOR**

My brothers to bring a warrant for my death?  
How strange this shows!

### **THIRD OFFICER**

There's no delaying time.

### **JUNIOR**

Desire 'em hither, call 'em up, my brothers!  
They shall deny it to your faces.

### **FIRST OFFICER**

My lord,  
They're far enough by this, at least at court,  
And this most strict command they left behind 'em,  
When grief swum in their eyes: they show'd like brothers,  
Brimful of heavy sorrow; but the duke  
Must have his pleasure.

### **JUNIOR**

His pleasure?

### **FIRST OFFICER**

These were their last words which my memory bears:  
"Commend us to the scaffold in our tears."

### **JUNIOR**

Pox dry their tears! What should I do with tears?  
I hate 'em worse than any citizen's son  
Can hate salt water. Here came a letter now,  
New-bleeding from their pens, scarce stinted yet;  
Would I'd been torn in pieces when I tore it.  
Look, you officious whoresons, words of comfort:  
"Not long a prisoner."

### **FIRST OFFICER**

It says true in that, sir, for you must suffer presently.

### **JUNIOR**

A villainous duns upon the letter! Knavish exposition! Look you then here, sir: "we'll get thee out by a trick," says he.

### **SECOND OFFICER**

That may hold too, sir, for you know a trick is commonly four cards, which was meant by us four officers.

### **JUNIOR**

Worse and worse dealing!

### **FIRST OFFICER**

III.[i. The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

The hour beckons us.  
The heads—man waits; lift up your eyes to heaven.

### **JUNIOR**

I thank you, faith; good, pretty, wholesome counsel.  
I should look up to heaven, as you said,  
Whilst he behind me cozens me of my head;  
Ay, that's the trick.

### **THIRD OFFICER**

You delay too long, my lord.

### **JUNIOR**

Stay, good authority's bastards, since I must  
Through brothers' perjury die, oh, let me venom  
Their souls with curses!

### **FIRST OFFICER**

Come, 'tis no time to curse.

### **JUNIOR**

Must I bleed then without respect of sign? Well,  
My fault was sweet sport, which the world approves;  
I die for that which every woman loves.

Exeunt.

[III.v. A lodge]

Enter Vindici with Hippolito his brother.

### **VINDICI**

Oh, sweet, delectable, rare, happy, ravishing!

### **HIPPOLITO**

Why, what's the matter, brother?

### **VINDICI**

Oh, 'tis able  
To make a man spring up and knock his forehead  
Against yon silver ceiling!

### **HIPPOLITO**

Prithee tell me.  
Why, may not I partake with you? You vow'd once  
To give me share to every tragic thought.

### **VINDICI**

By th' mass, I think I did too.  
Then I'll divide it to thee: the old duke  
Thinking my outward shape and inward heart

III.[i. The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Are cut out of one piece—for he that prates his secrets,  
His heart stands a' th' outside—hires me by price  
To greet him with a lady  
In some fit place veil'd from the eyes a' th' court,  
Some dark'ned, blushless angle, that is guilty  
Of his forefathers' lusts and great-folks' riots,  
To which I easily, to maintain my shape,  
Consented, and did wish his impudent grace  
To meet her here in this unsunned lodge,  
Wherein 'tis night at noon, and here the rather,  
Because unto the torturing of his soul  
The bastard and the duchess have appointed  
Their meeting too in this luxurious circle,  
Which most afflicting sight will kill his eyes  
Before we kill the rest of him.

### HIPPOLITO

'Twill, i'faith, most dreadfully digested.  
I see not how you could have miss'd me, brother.

### VINDICI

True, but the violence of my joy forgot it.

### HIPPOLITO

Ay, but where's that lady now?

### VINDICI

Oh, at that word  
I'm lost again; you cannot find me yet:  
I'm in a throng of happy apprehensions!  
He's suited for a lady; I have took care  
For a delicious lip, a sparkling eye:  
You shall be witness brother.  
Be ready; stand with your hat off.

Exit.

### HIPPOLITO

Troth, I wonder what lady it should be?  
Yet 'tis no wonder, now I think again,  
To have a lady stoop to a duke that stoops unto his men.  
'Tis common to be common through the world:  
And there's more private common shadowing vices  
Than those who are known both by their names and prices.  
[Taking off his hat] 'Tis part of my allegiance to stand bare  
To the duke's concubine, and here she comes.

Enter [Vindici] with the skull of his love dress'd up in tires.

### VINDICI

Madam, his grace will not be absent long.

III.[i. The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Secret? Ne'er doubt us, madam; 'twill be worth  
Three velvet gowns to your ladyship. Known?  
Few ladies respect that. Disgrace? A poor, thin shell;  
'Tis the best grace you have to do it well.  
I'll save your hand that labour; I'll unmask you.

[Draws back the tires.]

### HIPPOLITO

Why, brother, brother!

### VINDICI

Art thou beguil'd now? Tut, a lady can  
At such, all hid, beguile a wiser man.  
Have I not fitted the old surfeiter  
With a quaint piece of beauty? Age and bare bone  
Are e'er allied in action: here's an eye  
Able to tempt a great man to serve God,  
A pretty, hanging lip that has forgot now to dissemble;  
Methinks this mouth should make a swearer tremble,  
A drunkard clasp his teeth and not undo 'em  
To suffer wet damnation to run through 'em.  
Here's a cheek keeps her colour, let the wind go whistle:  
Spout rain, we fear thee not; be hot or cold  
Alls one with us. And is not he absurd  
Whose fortunes are upon their faces set,  
That fear no other God but wind and wet?

### HIPPOLITO

Brother, y'ave spoke that right.  
Is this the form that living shone so bright?

### VINDICI

The very same;  
And now methinks I [could] e'en chide myself  
For doting on her beauty, tho' her death  
Shall be reveng'd after no common action.  
Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours  
For thee? For thee does she undo herself?  
Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships  
For the poor benefit of a bewitching minute?  
Why does yon fellow falsify highways  
And put his life between the judge's lips  
To refine such a thing, keeps horse and men  
To beat their valours for her?  
Surely we're all mad people, and they  
Whom we think are, are not; we mistake those:  
'Tis we are mad in sense, they but in clothes.

### HIPPOLITO

Faith, and in clothes too we; give us our due.

III.[i. The palace]

**VINDICI**

Does every proud and self-affecting dame  
Camphor her face for this, and grieve her maker  
In sinful baths of milk, when many an infant starves,  
For her superfluous outside fall for this?  
Who now bids twenty pound a-night, prepares  
Music, perfumes, and sweetmeats? All are hush'd;  
Thou mayst lie chaste now! It were fine, methinks,  
To have thee seen at revels, forgetful feasts,  
And unclean brothels; sure 'twould fright the sinner  
And make him a good coward, put a reveller  
Out of his antic amble,  
And cloy an epicure with empty dishes.  
Here might a scornful and ambitious woman  
Look through and through herself; see, ladies, with false forms  
You deceive men but cannot deceive worms.  
Now to my tragic business. Look you, brother,  
I have not fashion'd this only for show  
And useless property; no, it shall bear a part  
E'en in [its] own revenge.

[Applies poison to the skull's mouth.]

This very skull,  
Whose mistress the duke poisoned, with this drug,  
The mortal curse of the earth, shall be reveng'd  
In the like strain, and kiss his lips to death.  
As much as the dumb thing can, he shall feel:  
What fails in poison, we'll supply in steel.

**HIPPOLITO**

Brother, I do applaud thy constant vengeance,  
The quaintness of thy malice above thought.

**VINDICI**

So 'tis laid on. Now come and welcome, duke;  
I have her for thee. I protest it, brother:  
Methinks she makes almost as fair a sign  
As some old gentlewoman in a periwig.  
Hide thy face now for shame; thou hadst need have a mask now:  
'Tis vain when beauty flows, but when it fleets,  
This would become graves better than the streets.

**HIPPOLITO**

You have my voice in that. Hark, the duke's come!

**VINDICI**

Peace, let's observe what company he brings,  
And how he does absent 'em, for you know  
He'll wish all private: brother, fall you back a little

III.[i. The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

With the bony lady.

**HIPPOLITO**

That I will.

**VINDICI**

So, so: now nine years' vengeance crowd into a minute!

[Enter the Duke talking to his Gentlemen.]

**DUKE**

You shall have leave to leave us, with this charge:  
Upon your lives, if we be miss'd by th' duchess  
Or any of the nobles, to give out  
We're privately rid forth.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] Oh, happiness!

**DUKE**

With some few honourable gentlemen, you may say;  
You may name those that are away from court.

**[FIRST] GENTLEMAN**

Your will and pleasure shall be done, my lord.

[Exeunt the Gentlemen.]

**VINDICI**

[Aside] Privately rid forth!  
He strives to make sure work on't.—Your good grace?

**DUKE**

Piato, well done. Hast brought her? What lady is't?

**VINDICI**

Faith, my lord, a country lady, a little bashful at first, as most of them are, but after the first kiss, my lord, the worst is past with them. Your grace knows now what you have to do; sh'as somewhat a grave look with her, but—

**DUKE**

I love that best: conduct her.

**VINDICI**

Have at all.

**DUKE**

In gravest looks the greatest faults seem less;  
Give me that sin that's rob'd in holiness.

**VINDICI**

III.[i. The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

[Aside to Hippolito] Back with the torch; brother, raise the perfumes.

### **DUKE**

How sweet can a duke [breathe]? Age has no fault;  
Pleasure should meet in a perfumed mist.  
Lady, sweetly encount'red. I came from court:  
I must be bold with you—

[Kisses the skull.]

Oh, what's this? Oh!

### **VINDICI**

Royal villain, white devil!

### **DUKE**

Oh!

### **VINDICI**

Brother,  
Place the torch here, that his affrighted eyeballs  
May start into those hollows. Duke, dost know  
Yon dreadful vizard? View it well: 'tis the skull  
Of Gloriana, whom thou poisoned'st last.

### **DUKE**

Oh, 't 'as poisoned me!

### **VINDICI**

Didst not know that till now?

### **DUKE**

What are you two?

### **VINDICI**

Villains all three! The very ragged bone  
Has been sufficiently reveng'd!

### **DUKE**

Oh, Hippolito? Call treason!

**HIPPOLITO** stamping on him

Yes, my good lord: treason, treason, treason!

### **DUKE**

Then I'm betray'd!

### **VINDICI**

Alas, poor lecher in the hands of knaves:  
A slavish duke is baser than his slaves.

The Revenger's Tragedy

**DUKE**

My teeth are eaten out!

**VINDICI**

Hadst any left?

**HIPPOLITO**

I think but few.

**VINDICI**

Then those that did eat are eaten.

**DUKE**

Oh, my tongue!

**VINDICI**

Your tongue? 'Twill teach you to kiss closer,  
Not like a [slobbering] Dutchman! You have eyes still:  
Look, monster, what a lady hast thou made me,  
My once betrothed wife!

**DUKE**

Is it thou, villain? Nay, then--

**VINDICI**

'Tis I, 'tis Vindici, 'tis I!

**HIPPOLITO**

And let this comfort thee: our lord and father  
Fell sick upon the infection of thy frowns  
And died in sadness; be that thy hope of life!

**DUKE**

Oh!

**VINDICI**

He had his tongue, yet grief made him die speechless.  
Puh, 'tis but early yet; now I'll begin  
To stick thy soul with ulcers, I will make  
Thy spirit grievous sore: it shall not rest,  
But like some pestilent man toss in thy breast. Mark me, duke,  
Thou'rt a renowned, high, and mighty cuckold.

**DUKE**

Oh!

**VINDICI**

Thy bastard, thy bastard rides a-hunting in thy brow.

**DUKE**

Millions of deaths!

III.[i. The palace]



## The Revenger's Tragedy

### VINDICI

Nay, to afflict thee more,  
Here in this lodge they meet for damned clips;  
Those eyes shall see the incest of their lips.

### DUKE

Is there a hell besides this, villains?

### VINDICI

Villain?  
Nay, heaven is just: scorns are the hires of scorns;  
I ne'er knew yet adulterer without horns.

### HIPPOLITO

Once ere they die 'tis quitted.

[Music within.]

### VINDICI

Hark, the music!  
Their banquet is prepar'd; they're coming.

### DUKE

Oh, kill me not with that sight!

### VINDICI

Thou shalt not lose that sight for all thy dukedom.

### DUKE

Traitors, murderers!

### VINDICI

What? Is not thy tongue eaten out yet?  
Then we'll invent a silence. Brother, stifle the torch.

### DUKE

Treason, murther!

### VINDICI

Nay, faith, we'll have you hush'd now with thy dagger.  
Nail down his tongue, and mine shall keep possession  
About his heart: if he but gasp he dies;  
We dread not death to quittance injuries. Brother,  
If he but wink, not brooking the foul object,  
Let our two other hands tear up his lids,  
And make his eyes like comets shine through blood;  
When the bad bleeds, then is the tragedy good.

### HIPPOLITO

Whist, brother: music's at our ear, they come.

III.[i. The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Enter [Spurio] the bastard meeting the Duchess. [They kiss.]

### **SPURIO**

Had not that kiss a taste of sin, 'twere sweet.

### **DUCHESS**

Why, there's no pleasure sweet but it is sinful.

### **SPURIO**

True, such a bitter sweetness fate hath given;  
Best side to us is the worst side to heaven.

### **DUCHESS**

Push, come: 'tis the old duke thy doubtful father;  
The thought of him rubs heaven in thy way,  
But I protest by yonder waxen fire,  
Forget him or I'll poison him.

### **SPURIO**

Madam, you urge a thought which ne'er had life.  
So deadly do I loathe him for my birth,  
That if he took me hasp'd within his bed,  
I would add murder to adultery,  
And with my sword give up his years to death.

### **DUCHESS**

Why, now thou'rt sociable! Let's in and feast.  
Loud'st music sound: pleasure is banquet's guest.

[Loud music.] Exeunt.

### **DUKE**

I cannot brook--

[Vindici stabs the Duke, who dies.]

### **VINDICI**

The brook is turn'd to blood.

### **HIPPOLITO**

Thanks to loud music.

### **VINDICI**

'Twas our friend indeed:  
'Tis state in music for a duke to bleed.  
The dukedom wants a head, tho' yet unknown;  
As fast as they peep up, let's cut 'em down.

Exeunt.

## The Revenger's Tragedy

[III.vi. The prison]

Enter the Duchess' two sons, Ambitioso and Supervacuo.

**AMBITIOSO**

Was not this execution rarely plotted?  
We are the duke's sons now.

**SUPERVACUO**

Ay, you may thank my policy for that.

**AMBITIOSO**

Your policy for what?

**SUPERVACUO**

Why, was 't not my invention, brother,  
To slip the judges, and in lesser compass,  
Did not I draw the model of his death,  
Advising you to sudden officers  
And e'en extemporal execution?

**AMBITIOSO**

Heart, 'twas a thing I thought on too.

**SUPERVACUO**

You thought on't too! 'Sfoot, slander not your thoughts  
With glorious untruth! I know 'twas from you.

**AMBITIOSO**

Sir, I say 'twas in my head.

[SUPERVACUO]

Ay, like your brains then,  
Ne'er to come out as long as you liv'd.

**AMBITIOSO**

You'd have the honour on't, forsooth, that your wit  
Led him to the scaffold.

**SUPERVACUO**

Since it is my due,  
I'll publish 't, but I'll ha't in spite of you.

**AMBITIOSO**

Methinks y'are much too bold; you should a little  
Remember us, brother, next to be honest duke.

**SUPERVACUO**

Ay, it shall be as easy for you to be duke  
As to be honest, and that's never, i'faith.

III.[i. The palace]

The Revenger's Tragedy

**AMBITIOSO**

Well, cold he is by this time, and because  
We're both ambitious, be it our amity,  
And let the glory be shar'd equally.

**SUPERVACUO**

I am content to that.

**AMBITIOSO**

This night our younger brother shall out of prison;  
I have a trick.

**SUPERVACUO**

A trick? Prithee, what is't?

**AMBITIOSO**

We'll get him out by a wile.

**SUPERVACUO**

Prithee, what wile?

**AMBITIOSO**

No, sir, you shall not know it till 't be done,  
For then you'd swear 'twere yours.

[Enter an Officer, holding a severed head.]

**SUPERVACUO**

How now, what's he?

**AMBITIOSO**

One of the officers.

**SUPERVACUO**

Desired news.

**AMBITIOSO**

How now, my friend?

**OFFICER**

My lords, under your pardon, I am allotted  
To that desertless office, to present you  
With the yet bleeding head.

**SUPERVACUO**

[Aside to Ambitioso] Ha, ha, excellent!

**AMBITIOSO**

[Aside to Supervacuo] All's sure our own: brother, canst weep, think'st thou?  
'Twould grace our flattery much; think of some dame:  
'Twill teach thee to dissemble.

III.[i. The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### **SUPERVACUO**

[Aside to Ambitioso] I have thought;  
Now for yourself.

### **AMBITIOSO**

Our sorrows are so fluent,  
Our eyes o'erflow our tongues; words spoke in tears  
Are like the murmurs of the waters; the sound  
Is loudly heard, but cannot be distinguish'd.

### **SUPERVACUO**

How died he, pray?

### **OFFICER**

Oh, full of rage and spleen!

### **SUPERVACUO**

He died most valiantly then; we're glad to hear it.

### **OFFICER**

We could not woo him once to pray.

### **AMBITIOSO**

He show'd himself a gentleman in that:  
Give him his due.

### **OFFICER**

But in the stead of prayer,  
He drew forth oaths.

### **SUPERVACUO**

Then did he pray, dear heart,  
Although you understood him not.

### **OFFICER**

My lords,  
E'en at his last, with pardon be it spoke,  
He curs'd you both.

### **SUPERVACUO**

He curs'd us? 'Las, good soul!

### **AMBITIOSO**

It was not in our powers, but the duke's pleasure.  
[Aside to Supervacuo] Finely dissembled a' both sides. Sweet fate,  
Oh, happy opportunity!

Enter Lussurioso.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

III.[i. The palace]

The Revenger's Tragedy

Now, my lords.

[AMBITIOSO, SUPERVACUO]

Oh!

**LUSSURIOSO**

Why do you shun me, brothers?

You may come nearer now;

The savour of the prison has forsook me.

I thank such kind lords as yourselves, I'm free.

**AMBITIOSO**

Alive!

**SUPERVACUO**

In health!

**AMBITIOSO**

Releas'd!

We were both e'en amaz'd with joy to see it.

**LUSSURIOSO**

I am much to thank you.

**SUPERVACUO**

Faith, we spar'd no tongue unto my lord the duke.

**AMBITIOSO**

I know your delivery, brother,

Had not been half so sudden but for us.

**SUPERVACUO**

Oh, how we pleaded!

**LUSSURIOSO**

Most deserving brothers,

In my best studies I will think of it.

Exit Lussurioso.

**AMBITIOSO**

Oh, death and vengeance!

**SUPERVACUO**

Hell and torments!

**AMBITIOSO**

Slave, can'st thou to delude us?

**OFFICER**

Delude you, my lords?

III.[i. The palace]

The Revenger's Tragedy

**SUPERVACUO**

Ay, villain, where's this head now?

**OFFICER**

Why, here, my lord.

Just after his delivery, you both came

With warrant from the duke to behead your brother.

**AMBITIOSO**

Ay, our brother, the duke's son.

**OFFICER**

The duke's son,

My lord, had his release before you came.

**AMBITIOSO**

Whose head's that then?

**OFFICER**

His whom you left command for, your own brother's.

**AMBITIOSO**

Our brother's? Oh, furies!

**SUPERVACUO**

Plagues!

**AMBITIOSO**

Confusions!

**SUPERVACUO**

Darkness!

**AMBITIOSO**

Devils!

**SUPERVACUO**

Fell it out so accursedly?

**AMBITIOSO**

So damnedly?

**SUPERVACUO**

Villain, I'll brain thee with it!

**OFFICER**

Oh, my good lord!

[Exit Officer, running.]

The Revenger's Tragedy

**SUPERVACUO**

The devil overtake thee!

**AMBITIOSO**

Oh, fatal!

**SUPERVACUO**

Oh, prodigious to our bloods!

**AMBITIOSO**

Did we dissemble?

**SUPERVACUO**

Did we make our tears women for thee?

**AMBITIOSO**

Laugh and rejoice for thee?

**SUPERVACUO**

Bring warrant for thy death?

**AMBITIOSO**

Mock off thy head?

**SUPERVACUO**

You had a trick, you had a wile, forsooth!

**AMBITIOSO**

A murrain meet 'em! There's none of these wiles  
That ever come to good: I see now  
There is nothing sure in mortality but mortality.  
Well, no more words; shalt be reveng'd, i'faith.  
Come, throw off clouds now, brother, think of vengeance  
And deeper-settled hate. Sirrah, sit fast:  
We'll pull down all, but thou shalt down at last.

Exeunt.



**IV.i. [The palace]**

Enter Lussurioso with Hippolito.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Hippolito.

**HIPPOLITO**

My lord, has your good lordship  
Ought to command me in?

**LUSSURIOSO**

I prithee leave us.

**HIPPOLITO**

[Aside] How's this? Come and leave us?

**LUSSURIOSO**

Hippolito.

**HIPPOLITO**

Your honour,  
I stand ready for any duteous employment.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Heart, what mak'st thou here?

**HIPPOLITO**

[Aside] A pretty, lordly humour:  
He bids me to be present, to depart;  
Something has stung his honour.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Be nearer, draw nearer:  
Ye are not so good, methinks; I'm angry with you.

**HIPPOLITO**

With me, my lord? I'm angry with myself for't.

**LUSSURIOSO**

You did prefer a goodly fellow to me.  
'Twas wittily elected, 'twas; I thought  
H'ad been a villain, and he proves a knave,  
To me a knave.

**HIPPOLITO**

I chose him for the best, my lord.  
'Tis much my sorrow if neglect in him,  
Breed discontent in you.

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### LUSSURIOSO

Neglect? 'Twas will! Judge of it:  
Firmly to tell of an incredible act,  
Not to be thought, less to be spoken of,  
'Twixt my stepmother and the bastard, oh,  
Incestuous sweets between 'em!

### HIPPOLITO

Fie, my lord!

### LUSSURIOSO

I, in kind loyalty to my father's forehead,  
Made this a desperate arm, and in that fury  
Committed treason on the lawful bed,  
And with my sword e'en [ras'd] my father's bosom,  
For which I was within a stroke of death.

### HIPPOLITO

Alack, I'm sorry.

Enter Vindici [disguised as Piato].

[Aside] 'Sfoot, just upon the stroke  
Jars in my brother; 'twill be villainous music.

### VINDICI

My honoured lord.

### LUSSURIOSO

Away! Prithee forsake us;  
Hereafter we'll not know thee.

### VINDICI

Not know me, my lord? Your lordship cannot choose.

### LUSSURIOSO

Be gone, I say: thou art a false knave.

### VINDICI

Why, the easier to be known, my lord.

### LUSSURIOSO

Push, I shall prove too bitter with a word,  
Make thee a perpetual prisoner,  
And lay this ironage upon thee!

### VINDICI

Mum,  
For there's a doom would make a woman dumb.  
[Aside] Missing the bastard, next him, the wind's come about;

IV.i. [The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Now 'tis my brother's turn to stay, mine to go out.

Exit Vindici.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

H'as greatly mov'd me.

### **HIPPOLITO**

Much to blame, i'faith.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

But I'll recover to his ruin: 'twas told me lately,  
I know not whether falsely, that you'd a brother.

### **HIPPOLITO**

Who I? Yes, my good lord, I have a brother.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

How chance the court ne'er saw him? Of what nature?  
How does he apply his hours?

### **HIPPOLITO**

Faith, to curse fates,  
Who, as he thinks, ordain'd him to be poor,  
Keeps at home full of want and discontent.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

There's hope in him, for discontent and want  
Is the best clay to mould a villain of.  
Hippolito, wish him repair to us,  
If there be ought in him to please our blood;  
For thy sake we'll advance him and build fair  
His meanest fortunes, for it is in us  
To rear up towers from cottages.

### **HIPPOLITO**

It is so, my lord, he will attend your honour;  
But he's a man in whom much melancholy dwells.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Why, the better; bring him to court.

### **HIPPOLITO**

With willingness and speed.  
[Aside] Whom he cast off e'en now must now succeed.  
Brother, disguise must off;  
In thine own shape now I'll prefer thee to him:  
How strangely does himself work to undo him.

Exit.

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### LUSSURIOSO

This fellow will come fitly; he shall kill  
That other slave that did abuse my spleen  
And made it swell to treason. I have put  
Much of my heart into him; he must die.  
He that knows great men's secrets and proves slight,  
That man ne'er lives to see his beard turn white.  
Ay, he shall speed him; I'll employ the brother:  
Slaves are but nails to drive out one another.  
He being of black condition, suitable  
To want and ill content, hope of preferment  
Will grind him to an edge.

The Nobles enter.

### FIRST NOBLE

Good days unto your honour.

### LUSSURIOSO

My kind lords, I do return the like.

### SECOND NOBLE

Saw you my lord the duke?

### LUSSURIOSO

My lord and father, is he from court?

### FIRST NOBLE

He's sure from court,  
But where, which way his pleasure took, we know not,  
Nor can we hear on't.

[Enter the Duke's Gentlemen.]

### LUSSURIOSO

Here come those should tell.  
Saw you my lord and father?

### [FIRST] GENTLEMAN

Not since two hours before noon, my lord,  
And then he privately rid forth.

### LUSSURIOSO

Oh, he's [rid] forth?

### FIRST NOBLE

'Twas wondrous privately.

### SECOND NOBLE

There's none i' th' court had any knowledge on't.

The Revenger's Tragedy

**LUSSURIOSO**

His grace is old and sudden; 'tis no treason  
To say the duke my father has a humour  
Or such a toy about him: what in us  
Would appear light, in him seems virtuous.

**[FIRST] GENTLEMAN**

'Tis oracle, my lord.

Exeunt.

[IV.ii. The palace]

Enter [Vindici] and Hippolito, Vindici out of his disguise.

**HIPPOLITO**

So, so, all's as it should be; y'are yourself.

**VINDICI**

How that great villain puts me to my shifts!

**HIPPOLITO**

He that did lately in disguise reject thee  
Shall, now thou art thyself, as much respect thee.

**VINDICI**

'Twill be the quainter fallacy; but, brother,  
'Sfoot, what use will he put me to now, think'st thou?

**HIPPOLITO**

Nay, you must pardon me in that, I know not:  
H'as some employment for you, but what 'tis  
He and his secretary, the devil, knows best.

**VINDICI**

Well, I must suit my tongue to his desires,  
What colour soe'er they be, hoping at last  
To pile up all my wishes on his breast.

**HIPPOLITO**

Faith, brother, he himself shows the way.

**VINDICI**

Now the duke is dead, the realm is clad in clay:  
His death being not yet known, under his name  
The people still are govern'd. Well, thou his son  
Art not long-liv'd; thou shalt not 'joy his death:  
To kill thee then, I should most honour thee,  
For 'twould stand firm in every man's belief  
Thou'st a kind child and only died'st with grief.

IV.i. [The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### HIPPOLITO

You fetch about well, but let's talk in present.  
How will you appear in fashion different,  
As well as in apparel, to make all things possible?  
If you be but once tripp'd, we fall forever.  
It is not the least policy to be doubtful;  
You must change tongue: familiar was your first.

### VINDICI

Why, I'll bear me in some strain of melancholy  
And string myself with heavy-sounding wire,  
Like such an instrument, that speaks merry  
Things sadly.

### HIPPOLITO

Then 'tis as I meant:  
I gave you out at first in discontent.

### VINDICI

I'll turn myself, and then—

[Enter Lussurioso.]

### HIPPOLITO

[Aside to Vindici] 'Sfoot, here he comes!  
Hast thought upon't?

### VINDICI

[Aside to Hippolito] Salute him, fear not me.

### LUSSURIOSO

Hippolito.

### HIPPOLITO

Your lordship.

### LUSSURIOSO

What's he yonder?

### HIPPOLITO

'Tis Vindici, my discontented brother,  
Whom 'cording to your will I've brought to court.

### LUSSURIOSO

Is that thy brother? Beshrew me, a good presence;  
I wonder h'as been from the court so long. [To Vindici] Come nearer.

### HIPPOLITO

Brother, Lord Lussurioso, the duke['s] son.

[Vindici] snatches off his hat and makes legs to him.

IV.i. [The palace]

The Revenger's Tragedy

**LUSSURIOSO**

Be more near to us; welcome, nearer yet.

**VINDICI**

How don you? God you god den.

**LUSSURIOSO**

We thank thee.

How strangely such a coarse, homely salute  
Shows in the palace, where we greet in fire  
Nimble and desperate tongues; should we name  
God in a salutation, 'twould ne'er be stood on't. Heaven!  
Tell me, what has made thee so melancholy?

**VINDICI**

Why, going to law.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Why, will that make a man melancholy?

**VINDICI**

Yes, to look long upon ink and black buckram: I went me to law in anno quadregesimo secundo, and I waded out of it in anno sextagesimo tertio.

**LUSSURIOSO**

What, three and twenty years in law?

**VINDICI**

I have known those that have been five and fifty, and all about pullen and pigs.

**LUSSURIOSO**

May it be possible such men should breath,  
To vex the terms so much?

**VINDICI**

'Tis food to some, my lord. There are old men at the present that are so poisoned with the affectation of law-words, having had many suites canvass'd, that their common talk is nothing but Barbary Latin: they cannot so much as pray but in law, that their sins may be remov'd with a writ of error, and their souls fetch'd up to heaven with a sasarara.

[LUSSURIOSO]

It seems most strange to me,  
Yet all the world meets round in the same bent:  
Where the heart's set, there goes the tongue's consent.  
How dost apply thy studies, fellow?

**VINDICI**

Study? Why, to think how a great, rich man lies a-dying, and a poor cobbler tolls the bell for him; how he cannot depart the world, and see the great chest stand before him; when he lies speechless, how he will point you readily to all the boxes; and when he is past all memory, as the gossips guess, then thinks he of forfeitures and

## The Revenger's Tragedy

obligations; nay, when to all men's hearings he whirls and rattles in the throat, he's busy threat'ning his poor tenants; and this would last me now some seven years thinking or thereabouts. But I have a conceit a-coming in picture upon this: I draw it myself, which, i'faith la, I'll present to your honour; you shall not choose but like it, for your lordship shall give me nothing for it.

### LUSSURIOSO

Nay, you mistake me then,  
For I am publish'd bountiful enough;  
Let's taste of your conceit.

### VINDICI

In picture, my lord?

### LUSSURIOSO

Ay, in picture.

### VINDICI

Marry, this it is:  
"A usuring father to be boiling in hell,  
And his son and heir with a whore dancing over him."

### HIPPOLITO

[Aside] H'as par'd him to the quick.

### LUSSURIOSO

The conceit's pretty, i'faith,  
But take 't upon my life, 'twill ne'er be lik'd.

### VINDICI

No? Why, I'm sure the whore will be lik'd well enough.

### HIPPOLITO

[Aside] Ay, if she were out a' th' picture, he'd like her then himself.

### VINDICI

And as for the son and heir, he shall be an eyesore to no young revellers, for he shall be drawn in cloth-of-gold breeches.

### LUSSURIOSO

And thou hast put my meaning in the pockets  
And canst not draw that out; my thought was this:  
To see the picture of a usuring father  
Boiling in hell, our rich men would ne'er like it.

### VINDICI

Oh, true, I cry you heartily mercy! I know the reason, for some of 'em had rather be damn'd indeed than damn'd in colours.

### LUSSURIOSO

[Aside] A parlous melancholy; h'as wit enough  
To murder any man, and I'll give him means.—



## The Revenger's Tragedy

I think thou art ill-monied.

### VINDICI

Money! Ho, ho!  
'T 'as been my want so long, 'tis now my scoff.  
I've e'en forgot what colour silver's of.

### LUSSURIOSO

[Aside] It hits as I could wish.

### VINDICI

I get good clothes  
Of those that dread my humour, and for tableroom,  
I feed on those that cannot be rid of me.

### LUSSURIOSO

[Giving him gold] Somewhat to set thee up withal.

### VINDICI

Oh, mine eyes!

### LUSSURIOSO

How now, man?

### VINDICI

Almost struck blind!  
This bright, unusual shine to me seems proud;  
I dare not look till the sun be in a cloud.

### LUSSURIOSO

[Aside] I think I shall affect his melancholy.—  
How are they now?

### VINDICI

The better for your asking.

### LUSSURIOSO

You shall be better yet if you but fasten  
Truly on my intent; now y'are both present,  
I will unbrace such a close, private villain  
Unto your vengeful swords, the like ne'er heard of,  
Who hath disgrac'd you much and injur'd us.

### HIPPOLITO

Disgraced us, my lord?

### LUSSURIOSO

Ay, Hippolito.  
I kept it here till now that both your angers  
Might meet him at once.

The Revenger's Tragedy

**VINDICI**

I'm covetous  
To know the villain.

**LUSSURIOSO**

You know him: that slave pander,  
Piato, whom we threatened last  
With iron's perpetual prisonment.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] All this is I.

**HIPPOLITO**

Is't he, my lord?

**LUSSURIOSO**

I'll tell you,  
You first preferr'd him to me.

**VINDICI**

Did you, brother?

**HIPPOLITO**

I did indeed.

**LUSSURIOSO**

And the ingrateful villain,  
To quit that kindness, strongly wrought with me,  
Being as you see a likely man for pleasure,  
With jewels to corrupt your virgin sister.

**HIPPOLITO**

Oh, villain!

**VINDICI**

He shall surely die that did it.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Ay, far from thinking any virgin harm,  
Especially knowing her to be as chaste  
As that part which scarce suffers to be touch'd,  
Th' eye would not endure him.

**VINDICI**

Would you not, my lord?  
'Twas wondrous honourably done.

**LUSSURIOSO**

But with some [fine] frowns kept him out.

**VINDICI**

IV.i. [The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Out, slave!

### LUSSURIOSO

What did me he but in revenge of that  
Went of his own free will to make infirm  
Your sister's honour, whom I honour with my soul  
For chaste respect, and not prevailing there,  
As 'twas but desperate folly to attempt it,  
In mere spleen, by the way, waylays your mother,  
Whose honour being a coward as it seems  
Yielded by little force.

### VINDICI

Coward indeed!

### LUSSURIOSO

He, proud of their advantage, as he thought,  
Brought me these news for happy, but I,  
Heaven forgive me for't—

### VINDICI

What did your honour?

### LUSSURIOSO

In rage push'd him from me,  
Trampled beneath his throat, spurn'd him, and bruis'd:  
Indeed I was too cruel, to say troth.

### HIPPOLITO

Most nobly manag'd.

### VINDICI

Has not heaven an ear? Is all lightning wasted?

### LUSSURIOSO

If I now were so impatient in a modest cause,  
What should you be?

### VINDICI

Full mad: he shall not live  
To see the moon change.

### LUSSURIOSO

He's about the palace;  
Hippolito, entice him this way, that thy brother  
May take full mark of him.

### HIPPOLITO

Heart, that shall not need, my lord,  
I can direct him so far.

The Revenger's Tragedy

**LUSSURIOSO**

Yet for my hate's sake,  
Go, wind him this way; I'll see him bleed myself.

**HIPPOLITO**

[Taking Vindici aside] What now, brother?

**VINDICI**

Nay, e'en what you will: y'are put to't, brother.

**HIPPOLITO**

An impossible task, I'll swear,  
To bring him hither that's already here.

Exit Hippolito.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Thy name, I have forgot it.

**VINDICI**

[Vindici], my lord.

**LUSSURIOSO**

'Tis a good name, that.

**VINDICI**

Ay, a revenger.

**LUSSURIOSO**

It does betoken courage: [thou] shouldst be valiant  
And kill thine enemies.

**VINDICI**

That's my hope, my lord.

**LUSSURIOSO**

This slave is one.

**VINDICI**

I'll doom him.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Then I'll praise thee.  
Do thou observe me best, and I'll best raise thee.

Enter Hippolito.

**VINDICI**

Indeed, I thank you.

**LUSSURIOSO**

IV.i. [The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Now, Hippolito,  
Where's the slave pander?

### HIPPOLITO

Your good lordship  
Would have a loathsome sight of him, much offensive.  
He's not in case now to be seen, my lord;  
The worst of all the deadly sins is in him:  
That beggarly damnation, drunkenness.

### LUSSURIOSO

Then he's a double slave.

### VINDICI

[Aside to Hippolito] 'Twas well convey'd  
Upon a sudden wit.

### LUSSURIOSO

What, are you both  
Firmly resolv'd? I'll see him dead myself.

### VINDICI

Or else let not us live.

### LUSSURIOSO

You may direct  
Your brother to take note of him.

### HIPPOLITO

I shall.

### LUSSURIOSO

Rise but in this and you shall never fall.

### VINDICI

Your honour's vassals.

### LUSSURIOSO

[Aside] This was wisely carried.  
Deep policy in us makes fools of such:  
Then must a slave die when he knows too much.

Exit Lussurioso.

### VINDICI

Oh, thou almighty patience, 'tis my wonder  
That such a fellow, impudent and wicked,  
Should not be cloven as he stood,  
Or with a secret wind burst open!  
Is there no thunder left, or is't kept up  
In stock for heavier vengeance? There it goes!

IV.i. [The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### HIPPOLITO

Brother, we lose ourselves.

### VINDICI

But I have found it.

'Twill hold, 'tis sure; thanks, thanks to any spirit  
That mingled it 'mongst my inventions!

### HIPPOLITO

What is't?

### VINDICI

'Tis sound and good, thou shalt partake it:  
I'm hir'd to kill myself.

### HIPPOLITO

True.

### VINDICI

Prithee mark it:  
And the old duke being dead but not convey'd,  
For he's already miss'd too, and you know  
Murder will peep out of the closest husk.

### HIPPOLITO

Most true.

### VINDICI

What say you then to this device,  
If we dress'd up the body of the duke?

### HIPPOLITO

In that disguise of yours.

### VINDICI

Y'are quick, y'ave reach'd it.

### HIPPOLITO

I like it wondrously.

### VINDICI

And being in drink, as you have publish'd him,  
To lean him on his elbow, as if sleep had caught him,  
Which claims most interest in such sluggy men.

### HIPPOLITO

Good yet, but here's a doubt:  
[We], thought by th' duke's son to kill that pander,  
Shall when he is known be thought to kill the duke.

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### VINDICI

Neither. Oh, thanks, it is substantial!  
For that disguise being on him, which I wore,  
It will be thought I, which he calls the pander,  
Did kill the duke and fled away in his apparel,  
Leaving him so disguis'd to avoid swift pursuit.

### HIPPOLITO

Firmer and firmer.

### VINDICI

Nay, doubt not 'tis in grain;  
I warrant it hold colour.

### HIPPOLITO

Let's about it.

### VINDICI

But, by the way too, now I think on't, brother,  
Let's conjure that base devil out of our mother.

Exeunt.

[IV.iii. The palace]

Enter the Duchess arm in arm with the bastard [Spurio]; he seemeth lasciviously to her. After them, enter Supervacuo, running with a rapier, his brother [Ambitioso] stops him.

### SPURIO

Madam, unlock yourself; should it be seen,  
Your arm would be suspected.

### DUCHESS

Who is't that dares suspect, or this or these?  
May not we deal our favours where we please?

### SPURIO

I'm confident you may.

Exeunt [Duchess and Spurio].

### AMBITIOSO

'Sfoot, brother, hold!

### SUPERVACUO

Woult let the bastard shame us?

### AMBITIOSO

Hold, hold, brother;  
There's fitter time than now.

IV.i. [The palace]

The Revenger's Tragedy

**SUPERVACUO**

Now, when I see it!

**AMBITIOSO**

'Tis too much seen already.

**SUPERVACUO**

Seen and known,  
The nobler she's, the baser is she grown.

**AMBITIOSO**

If she were bent lasciviously, the fault  
Of mighty women that sleep soft. Oh, death,  
Must she needs choose such an unequal sinner  
To make all worse?

**SUPERVACUO**

A bastard, the duke's bastard!  
Shame heap'd on shame!

**AMBITIOSO**

Oh, our disgrace!  
Most women have small [waist] the world throughout,  
But [their] desires are thousand miles about.

**SUPERVACUO**

Come, stay not here, let's after and prevent,  
Or else they'll sin faster than we'll repent.

[IV.iv. Vindici's house]

Enter [Vindici] and Hippolito bringing out [their] mother [Gratiana], one by one shoulder, and the other by the other, with daggers in their hands.

**VINDICI**

Oh, thou for whom no name is bad enough!

**[GRATIANA]**

What means my sons? What, will you murder me?

**VINDICI**

Wicked, unnatural parent!

**HIPPOLITO**

Fiend of women!

**[GRATIANA]**

Oh! Are sons turn'd monsters? Help!

**VINDICI**

In vain.

IV.i. [The palace]



## The Revenger's Tragedy

**[GRATIANA]**

Are you so barbarous to set iron nipples  
Upon the breast that gave you suck?

**VINDICI**

That breast  
Is turned to quarled poison.

**[GRATIANA]**

Cut not your days for't: am not I your mother?

**VINDICI**

Thou dost usurp that title now by fraud,  
For in that shell of mother breeds a bawd.

**[GRATIANA]**

A bawd? Oh, name far loathsomer than hell!

**HIPPOLITO**

It should be so, knew'st thou thy office well.

**[GRATIANA]**

I hate it!

**VINDICI**

Ah, is't possible, you powers on high,  
That women should dissemble when they die?

**[GRATIANA]**

Dissemble!

**VINDICI**

Did not the duke's son direct  
A fellow of the world's condition hither,  
That did corrupt all that was good in thee,  
Made thee uncivilly forget thyself,  
And work our sister to his lust?

**[GRATIANA]**

Who, I?

That had been monstrous! I defy that man  
For any such intent: none lives so pure  
But shall be soil'd with slander.  
Good son, believe it not.

**VINDICI**

Oh, I'm in doubt,  
Whether I'm myself or no.  
Stay, let me look again upon this face.  
Who shall be sav'd when mothers have no grace?

IV.i. [The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### HIPPOLITO

'Twould make one half despair.

### VINDICI

I was the man.  
Defy me now? Let's see do't modestly.

### [GRATIANA]

Oh, hell unto my soul!

### VINDICI

In that disguise, I sent from the duke's son,  
Tried you, you, and found you base metal  
As any villain might have done.

### [GRATIANA]

Oh, no,  
No tongue but yours could have bewitch'd me so.

### VINDICI

Oh, nimble in damnation, quick in tune;  
There is no devil could strike fire so soon!  
I am confuted in a word.

### [GRATIANA]

Oh, sons,  
Forgive me; to myself I'll prove more true:  
You that should honour me, I kneel to you.

### VINDICI

A mother to give aim to her own daughter.

### HIPPOLITO

True, brother, how far beyond nature 'tis,  
Tho' many mothers do't.

### VINDICI

Nay, and you draw tears once, go you to bed.  
Wet will make iron blush and change to red:  
Brother, it rains, 'twill spoil your dagger; house it.

### HIPPOLITO

'Tis done.

### VINDICI

I'faith, 'tis a sweet shower; it does much good.  
The fruitful grounds and meadows of her soul  
Has been long dry: pour down thou blessed dew.  
Rise, mother; troth, this shower has made you higher.

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### [GRATIANA]

Oh, you heavens!  
Take this infectious spot out of my soul;  
I'll rinse it in seven waters of mine eyes.  
Make my tears salt enough to taste of grace.  
To weep is to our sex naturally given,  
But to weep truly, that's a gift from heaven.

### VINDICI

Nay, I'll kiss you now. Kiss her, brother.  
Let's marry her to our souls, wherein's no lust,  
And honourably love her.

### HIPPOLITO

Let it be.

### VINDICI

For honest women are so [seld] and rare,  
'Tis good to cherish those poor few that are.  
Oh, you of easy wax, do but imagine  
Now the disease has left you, how leprously  
That office would have cling'd unto your forehead.  
All mothers that had any graceful hue  
Would have worn masks to hide their face at you;  
It would have grown to this: at your foul name  
Green-colour'd maids would have turn'd red with shame.

### HIPPOLITO

And then our sister, full of hire and baseness--

### VINDICI

There had been boiling lead again.  
The duke's son's great concubine!  
A drab of state, a cloth-a'-silver slut,  
To have her train borne up and her soul trail  
I' th' dirt: great!

### HIPPOLITO

To be miserably great; rich,  
To be eternally wretched.

### VINDICI

Oh, common madness!  
Ask but the thriving'st harlot in cold blood,  
She'd give the world to make her honour good.  
Perhaps you'll say but only to th' duke's son  
In private; why, she first begins with one  
Who afterward to thousand proves a whore:  
"Break ice in one place, it will crack in more."

### [GRATIANA]

IV.i. [The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Most certainly applied.

### **HIPPOLITO**

Oh, brother, you forget our business.

### **VINDICI**

And well rememb'red; joy's a subtle elf:  
I think man's happiest when he forgets himself.  
Farewell, once dried, now holy-wat' red mead;  
Our hearts wear feathers that before wore lead.

### **[GRATIANA]**

I'll give you this, that one I never knew  
Plead better for and 'gainst the devil than you.

### **VINDICI**

You make me proud on't.

### **HIPPOLITO**

Commend us in all virtue to our sister.

### **VINDICI**

Ay, for the love of heaven, to that true maid.

### **[GRATIANA]**

With my best words.

### **VINDICI**

Why, that was motherly said.

Exeunt [Vindici and Hippolito].

### **[GRATIANA]**

I wonder now what fury did transport me?  
I feel good thoughts begin to settle in me.  
Oh, with what forehead can I look on her  
Whose honour I've so impiously beset?

[Enter Castiza.]

And here she comes.

### **CASTIZA**

Now, mother, you have wrought with me so strongly  
That what for my advancement, as to calm  
The trouble of your tongue: I am content.

### **[GRATIANA]**

Content to what?

### **CASTIZA**

IV.i. [The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

To do as you have wish'd me,  
To prostitute my breast to the duke's son,  
And to put myself to common usury.

**[GRATIANA]**

I hope you will not so!

**CASTIZA**

Hope you I will not?  
That's not the hope you look to be saved in.

**[GRATIANA]**

Truth, but it is.

**CASTIZA**

Do not deceive yourself;  
I am as you e'en out of marble wrought.  
What would you now? Are ye not pleas'd yet with me?  
You shall not wish me to be more lascivious  
Than I intend to be.

**[GRATIANA]**

Strike not me cold.

**CASTIZA**

How often have you charg'd me on your blessing  
To be a cursed woman! When you knew  
Your blessing had no force to make me lewd,  
You laid your curse upon me. That did more;  
The mother's curse is heavy: where that fights,  
Suns set in storm and daughters lose their lights.

**[GRATIANA]**

Good child, dear maid, if there be any spark  
Of heavenly intellectual fire within thee,  
Oh, let my breath revive it to a flame!  
Put not all out with woman's wilful follies.  
I am recover'd of that foul disease  
That haunts too many mothers. Kind, forgive me;  
Make me not sick in health: if then  
My words prevail'd when they were wickedness,  
How much more now when they are just and good?

**CASTIZA**

I wonder what you mean. Are not you she  
For whose infect persuasions I could scarce  
Kneel out my prayers, and had much ado  
In three hours reading to untwist so much  
Of the black serpent as you wound about me?

**[GRATIANA]**

IV.i. [The palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

'Tis unfruitful, held tedious to repeat what's past;  
I'm now your present mother.

**CASTIZA**

Push, now 'tis too late.

**[GRATIANA]**

Bethink again, thou know'st not what thou sayst.

**CASTIZA**

No? Deny advancement, treasure, the duke's son?

**[GRATIANA]**

Oh, see,  
I spoke those words, and now they poison me!  
What will the deed do then?  
Advancement? True, as high as shame can pitch.  
For treasure, whoe'er knew a harlot rich,  
Or could build by the purchase of her sin  
An hospital to keep their bastards in?  
The duke's son! Oh, when women are young courtiers,  
They are sure to be old beggars!  
To know the miseries most harlots taste,  
Thou'dst wish thyself unborn when thou art unchaste.

**CASTIZA**

Oh, mother, let me twine about your neck,  
And kiss you till my soul melt on your lips:  
I did but this to try you.

**[GRATIANA]**

Oh, speak truth!

**CASTIZA**

Indeed, I did not, for no tongue has force  
To alter me from honest.  
If maidens would, men's words could have no power.  
A virgin honour is a crystal tower,  
Which being weak is guarded with good spirits:  
Until she basely yields no ill inherits.

**[GRATIANA]**

Oh, happy child! Faith and thy birth hath saved me.  
'Mongst thousands daughters happiest of all others!  
[Be] thou a glass for maids, and I for mothers.

Exeunt.

The Revenger's Tragedy

**V.i. [A room in the palace]**

Enter [Vindici] and Hippolito [with the Duke's corpse in Piato's clothes, which they prop up in chair].

**VINDICI**

So, so, he leans well; take heed you wake him not, brother.

**HIPPOLITO**

I warrant you, my life for yours.

**VINDICI**

That's a good lay, for I must kill myself!

Brother, that's I: that sits for me, do you mark it?

And I must stand ready here to make away myself yonder: I must sit to be kill'd, and stand to kill myself. I could vary it not so little as thrice over again, 't 'as some eight returns like Michaelmas Term.

**HIPPOLITO**

That's enow, a' conscience.

**VINDICI**

But, sirrah, does the duke's son come single?

**HIPPOLITO**

No, there's the hell on't, his faith's too feeble to go alone; he brings flesh-flies after him that will buzz against supertime and hum for his coming out.

**VINDICI**

Ah, the fly-flop of vengeance beat 'em to pieces! Here was the sweetest occasion, the fittest hour, to have made my revenge familiar with him, show him the body of the duke his father, and how quaintly he died like a politician in huggermugger, made no man acquainted with it, and in catastrophe slain him over his father's breast, and oh, I'm mad to lose such a sweet opportunity!

**HIPPOLITO**

Nay, push, prithee be content! There's no remedy present; may not hereafter times open in as fair faces as this?

**VINDICI**

They may if they can paint so well.

**HIPPOLITO**

Come, now to avoid all suspicion, let's forsake this room, and be going to meet the duke's son.

**VINDICI**

Content, I'm for any weather.

Enter Lussurioso.

Heart, step close, here he comes!

**HIPPOLITO**

V.i. [A room in the palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

My honour'd lord?

**LUSSURIOSO**

Oh, me; you both present?

**VINDICI**

E'en newly, my lord, just as your lordship enter'd now; about this place we had notice given he should be, but in some loathsome plight or other.

**HIPPOLITO**

Came your honour private?

**LUSSURIOSO**

Private enough for this: only a few  
Attend my coming out.

**HIPPOLITO**

[Aside] Death rot those few!

**LUSSURIOSO**

Stay, yonder's the slave.

**VINDICI**

Mass, there's the slave indeed, my lord!  
[Aside] 'Tis a good child, he calls his father slave.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Ay, that's the villain, the damn'd villain: softly,  
Tread easy.

**VINDICI**

Puh, I warrant you, my lord,  
We'll stifle in our breaths.

**LUSSURIOSO**

That will do well.  
[Aside] Base rogue, thou sleepest thy last; 'tis policy  
To have him kill'd in's sleep, for if he wak'd  
He would betray all to them.

**VINDICI**

But, my lord—

**LUSSURIOSO**

Ha, what sayst?

**VINDICI**

Shall we kill him now he's drunk?

**LUSSURIOSO**

Ay, best of all.

V.i. [A room in the palace]



The Revenger's Tragedy

**VINDICI**

Why, then he will ne'er live to be sober.

**LUSSURIOSO**

No matter, let him reel to hell.

**VINDICI**

But being so full of liquor, I fear he will put out all the fire—

**LUSSURIOSO**

Thou art a mad beast.

**VINDICI**

And leave none to warm your lordship's golls withal,  
For he that dies drunk falls into hellfire  
Like a bucket a' water, qush, qush.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Come, be ready, nake your swords; think of your wrongs:  
This slave has injur'd you.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] Troth, so he has,  
And he has paid well for't.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Meet with him now.

**VINDICI**

You'll bear us out, my lord?

**LUSSURIOSO**

Puh, am I a lord for nothing think you? Quickly, now.

**VINDICI**

Sa, sa, sa! [Stabs the corpse.] Thump, there he lies.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Nimbly done. Ha? Oh, villains, murderers,  
'Tis the old duke my father!

**VINDICI**

That's a jest.

**LUSSURIOSO**

What stiff and cold already?  
Oh, pardon me to call you from your names;  
'Tis none of your deed: that villain Piato,  
Whom you thought now to kill, has murder'd him  
And left him thus disguis'd.

V.i. [A room in the palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### **HIPPOLITO**

And not unlikely.

### **VINDICI**

Oh, rascal! Was he not asham'd  
To put the duke into a greasy doublet?

### **LUSSURIOSO**

He has been cold and stiff who knows how long?

### **VINDICI**

[Aside] Marry, that do I!

### **LUSSURIOSO**

No words, I pray, of anything intended.

### **VINDICI**

Oh, my lord!

### **HIPPOLITO**

I would fain have your lordship think that we have small reason to prate.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Faith, thou sayst true; I'll forthwith send to court  
For all the nobles, bastard, duchess, all,  
How here by miracle we found him dead,  
And in his raiment that foul villain fled.

### **VINDICI**

That will be the best way, my lord, to clear us all: let's cast about to be clear.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Ho, Nencio, Sordido, and the rest!

Enter all [Lussurioso's attendants].

### **[SORDIDO]**

My lord.

### **[NENCIO]**

My lord.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Be witnesses of a strange spectacle:  
Choosing for private conference that sad room,  
We found the duke my father 'geal'd in blood.

### **[SORDIDO]**

My lord, the duke! Run, hie thee, Nencio,  
Startle the court by signifying so much.

V.i. [A room in the palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

[Exit Nencio.]

### VINDICI

[Aside to Hippolito] Thus much by wit a deep revenger can:  
When murder's known, to be the clearest man.  
We're farthest off, and with as bold an eye  
Survey his body as the standers-by.

### LUSSURIOSO

My royal father, too basely let blood  
By a malevolent slave!

### HIPPOLITO

[Aside to Vindici] Hark, he calls thee slave again.

### VINDICI

[Aside to Hippolito] Ha's lost, he may.

### LUSSURIOSO

Oh, sight, look hither! See, his lips are gnawn with poison!

### VINDICI

How! His lips? By th' mass, they be!

### LUSSURIOSO

Oh, villain! Oh, rogue! Oh, slave! Oh, rascal!

### HIPPOLITO

[Aside] Oh, good deceit! He quits him with like terms.

[Enter Ambitioso, Supervacuo, Spurio, Duchess, the Duke's Gentlemen, Nobles, and guards.]

### FIRST NOBLE

Where?

### SECOND NOBLE

Which way?

### AMBITIOSO

Over what roof hangs this prodigious comet  
In deadly fire?

### LUSSURIOSO

Behold, behold, my lords:  
The duke my father's murder'd by a vassal  
That owes this habit, and here left disguis'd.

### DUCHESS

My lord and husband!

V.i. [A room in the palace]

The Revenger's Tragedy

**SECOND NOBLE**

Reverend majesty!

**FIRST NOBLE**

I have seen these clothes often attending on him.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] That nobleman has been i' th' country, for he does not lie.

**SUPERVACUO**

[Aside to Ambitioso] Learn of our mother; let's dissemble too.  
I am glad he's vanish'd; so I hope are you.

**AMBITIOSO**

[Aside to Supervacuo] Ay, you may take my word for't.

**SPURIO**

[Aside] Old Dad dead?  
Ay, one of his cast sins will send the fates  
Most hearty commendations by his own son.  
I'll tug the new stream till strength be done.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Where be those two that did affirm to us  
My lord the duke was privately rid forth?

**[FIRST] GENTLEMAN**

Oh, pardon us, my lords, he gave that charge  
Upon our lives if he were miss'd at court  
To answer so; he rode not anywhere,  
We left him private with that fellow here.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] Confirm'd.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Oh heavens, that false charge was his death!  
Impudent beggars, durst you to our face,  
Maintain such a false answer? Bear him straight  
To execution.

**[FIRST] GENTLEMAN**

My lord!

**LUSSURIOSO**

Urge me no more.  
In this excuse may be call'd half the murder.

**VINDICI**

[Aside] You've sentenc'd well.

V.i. [A room in the palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### LUSSURIOSO

Away, see it be done.

[Exit the First Gentleman, guarded.]

### VINDICI

[Aside] Could you not stick? See what confession doth.  
Who would not lie when men are hang'd for truth?

### HIPPOLITO

[Aside to Vindici] Brother, how happy is our vengeance?

### VINDICI

[Aside to Hippolito] Why, it hits,  
Past the apprehension of indifferent wits.

### LUSSURIOSO

My lord, let post-horse be sent  
Into all places to entrap the villain.

### VINDICI

[Aside] Post-horse? Ha, ha!

### [FIRST] NOBLE

My lord, we're something bold to know our duty.  
You father's accidentally departed;  
The titles that were due to him meet you.

### LUSSURIOSO

Meet me? I'm not at leisure, my good lord;  
I've many griefs to dispatch out a' th' way.  
[Aside] Welcome, sweet titles!—Talk to me, my lords,  
Of sepulchers and mighty emperors' bones,  
That's thought for me.

### VINDICI

[Aside] So, one may see by this  
How foreign markets go:  
Courtiers have feet a' th' nines and tongues a' th' twelves;  
They flatter dukes and dukes flatter themselves.

### [FIRST] NOBLE

My lord, it is your shine must comfort us.

### LUSSURIOSO

Alas, I shine in tears like the sun in April.

### [FIRST] NOBLE

You're now my lord's grace.

### LUSSURIOSO

V.i. [A room in the palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

My lord's grace? I perceive you'll have it so.

### **[FIRST] NOBLE**

'Tis but your own.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Then heavens give me grace to be so.

### **VINDICI**

[Aside] He prays well for himself.

### **[FIRST] NOBLE**

Madam, all sorrows  
Must run their circles into joys; no doubt but time  
Will make the murderer bring forth himself.

### **VINDICI**

[Aside] He were an ass then, i'faith.

### **[FIRST] NOBLE**

In the mean season,  
Let us bethink the latest funeral honours  
Due to the duke's cold body, and withal,  
Calling to memory our new happiness,  
Spread in his royal son: lords, gentlemen,  
Prepare for revels.

### **VINDICI**

[Aside] Revels!

### **NOBLE**

Time hath several falls.  
Griefs lift up joys, feasts put down funerals.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Come then, my lords, my favours to you all.  
[Aside] The duchess is suspected foully bent;  
I'll begin dukedom with her banishment.

Exeunt Duke [Lussurioso], Nobles, [Gentlemen, Attendants,] and Duchess.

### **HIPPOLITO**

[Aside to Vindici] Revels!

### **VINDICI**

[Aside to Hippolito] Ay, that's the word; we are firm yet:  
Strike one strain more and then we crown our wit.

Exeunt brothers [Vindici and Hippolito].

### **SPURIO**

V.i. [A room in the palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Well, have the fairest mark, so said the duke when he begot me,  
And if I miss his heart or near about,  
Then have at any: a bastard scorns to be out.

[Exit Spurio.]

### **SUPERVACUO**

Not'st thou that Spurio, brother?

[AMBITIOSO]

Yes, I note him to our shame.

### **SUPERVACUO**

He shall not live; his hair shall not grow much longer: in this time of revels, tricks may be set afoot. Seest thou yon new moon? It shall out-live the new duke by much; this hand shall dispossess him, then we're mighty. A masque is treason's license; that build upon:  
'Tis murder's best face when a vizard's on.

Exit [Supervacuo].

### **AMBITIOSO**

Is't so? ['Tis] very good.

And do you think to be duke then, kind brother?

I'll see fair play: drop one and there lies t'other.

Exit Ambitioso.

[V.ii. Vindici's house]

Enter [Vindici] and Hippolito, with Piero and other Lords.

### **VINDICI**

My lords, be all of music; strike old griefs into other countries  
That flow in too much milk and have faint livers,  
Not daring to stab home their discontents:  
Let our hid flames break out as fire, as lightning,  
To blast this villainous dukedom vex'd with sin;  
Wind up your souls to their full height again.

### **PIERO**

How?

### **FIRST LORD**

Which way?

### **THIRD LORD**

Any way: our wrongs are such,  
We cannot justly be reveng'd too much.

### **VINDICI**

You shall have all enough. Revels are toward,

V.i. [A room in the palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

And those few nobles that have long suppress'd you  
Are busied to the furnishing of a masque,  
And do affect to make a pleasant tale on't.  
The masquing suits are fashioning; now comes in  
That which must glad us all: we to take pattern  
Of all those suits, the colour, trimming, fashion,  
E'en to an undistinguish'd hair almost,  
Then ent'ring first, observing the true form,  
Within a strain or two we shall find leisure  
To steal our swords out handsomely,  
And when they think their pleasure sweet and good,  
In midst of all their joys, they shall sigh blood.

### **PIERO**

Weightily, effectually.

### **THIRD LORD**

Before the t'other masquers come.

### **VINDICI**

We're gone, all done and past.

### **PIERO**

But how for the duke's guard?

### **VINDICI**

Let that alone;  
By one and one their strengths shall be drunk down.

### **HIPPOLITO**

There are five hundred gentlemen in the action  
That will apply themselves and not stand idle.

### **PIERO**

Oh, let us hug your bosoms!

### **VINDICI**

Come, my lords,  
Prepare for deeds; let other times have words.

Exeunt.

[V.iii. The palace banqueting hall]

In a dumb show, the possessing of the young duke [Lussurioso] with all his Nobles. Then sounding music, a furnish'd table is brought forth; then enters the duke [Lussurioso] and his [three] Nobles to the banquet. A blazing star appeareth.

### **[FIRST] NOBLE**

Many harmonious hours and choicest pleasures  
Fill up the royal numbers of your years.

V.i. [A room in the palace]



## The Revenger's Tragedy

### LUSSURIOSO

My lords, we're pleas'd to thank you [aside] tho' we know  
'Tis but your duty now to wish it so.

### [FIRST] NOBLE

That shine makes us all happy.

### THIRD NOBLE

[Aside] His grace frowns?

### SECOND NOBLE

[Aside] Yet we must say he smiles.

### FIRST NOBLE

[Aside] I think we must.

### LUSSURIOSO

[Aside] That foul, incontinent duchess we have banish'd;  
The bastard shall not live: after these revels  
I'll begin strange ones; he and the stepsons  
Shall pay their lives for the first subsidies.  
We must not frown so soon, else 't 'ad been now.

### FIRST NOBLE

My gracious lord, please you prepare for pleasure:  
The masque is not far off.

### LUSSURIOSO

We are for pleasure.  
[To the comet] Beshrew thee, what art thou mad'st me start?  
Thou hast committed treason: a blazing star!

### FIRST NOBLE

A blazing star? Oh, where, my lord?

### LUSSURIOSO

Spy out!

### SECOND NOBLE

See, see, my lords: a wondrous, dreadful one.

### LUSSURIOSO

I am not pleas'd at that ill-knotted fire,  
That bushing, flaring star. Am not I duke?  
It should not quake me now: had it appear'd  
Before it, I might then have justly fear'd;  
But yet they say, whom art and learning weds,  
When stars [wear] locks, they threaten great men's heads.  
Is it so? You are read, my lords.

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### FIRST NOBLE

May it please your grace,  
It shows great anger.

### LUSSURIOSO

That does not please our grace.

### SECOND NOBLE

Yet here's the comfort, my lord: many times  
When it seems most, it threatens fardest off.

### LUSSURIOSO

Faith, and I think so too.

### FIRST NOBLE

Beside, my lord,  
You're gracefully establish'd with the loves  
Of all your subjects: and for natural death,  
I hope it will be threescore years a-coming.

### LUSSURIOSO

True. No more but threescore years?

### FIRST NOBLE

Fourscore I hope, my lord.

### SECOND NOBLE

And fivescore, I.

### THIRD NOBLE

But 'tis my hope, my lord, you shall ne'er die.

### LUSSURIOSO

Give me thy hand; these others I rebuke.  
He that hopes so is fittest for a duke.  
Thou shalt sit next me; take your places, lords:  
We're ready now for sports; let 'em set on.  
[To the comet] You thing, we shall forget you quite anon!

### THIRD NOBLE

I hear 'em coming, my lord.

Enter the Masque of Revengers: the two brothers [Vindici and Hippolito] and two Lords more.

### LUSSURIOSO

Ah, 'tis well.  
[Aside] Brothers and bastard, you dance next in hell.

The Revengers dance. At the end, steal out their swords and these four kill the four at the table in their chairs. It thunders.

## The Revenger's Tragedy

### VINDICI

Mark thunder?  
Dost know thy cue, thou big-voic'd crier?  
Dukes' groans are thunder's watchwords.

### HIPPOLITO

So, my lords, you have enough.

### VINDICI

Come, let's away, no ling'ring.

### HIPPOLITO

Follow, go.

Exeunt [Hippolito and the two lords].

### VINDICI

No power is angry when the lustful die;  
When thunder claps, heaven likes the tragedy.

Exit Vindici. Enter the other masque of intended murderers: stepsons [Ambitioso, Supervacuo], bastard [Spurio], and a Fourth Man [Ambitioso's henchman], coming in dancing; the duke [Lussurioso] recovers a little in voice and groans, calls, "A guard, treason," at which they all start out of their measure, and turning towards the table, they find them all to be murdered.

### LUSSURIOSO

Oh, oh!

### SPURIO

Whose groan was that?

### LUSSURIOSO

Treason, a guard!

### AMBITIOSO

How now? All murder'd!

### SUPERVACUO

Murder'd!

### FOURTH MAN

And those his nobles?

### AMBITIOSO

Here's a labour sav'd:  
I thought to have sped him. 'Sblood, how came this?

[SUPERVACUO]

Then I proclaim myself: now I am duke.

### AMBITIOSO

V.i. [A room in the palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Thou duke! Brother, thou liest.

[Kills Supervacuo.]

### **SPURIO**

Slave, so dost thou!

[Kills Ambizioso.]

### **FOURTH MAN**

Base villain, hast thou slain my lord and master?

[Kills Spurio.] Enter the first men [Vindici, Hippolito, the two Lords].

### **VINDICI**

Pistols, treason, murder! Help, guard my lord the duke!

[Enter Antonio, guards.]

### **HIPPOLITO**

Lay hold upon this traitor!

[The guards seize the Fourth Man.]

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Oh!

### **VINDICI**

Alas, the duke is murder'd!

### **HIPPOLITO**

And the nobles!

### **VINDICI**

Surgeons, surgeons! Heart, does he breathe so long?

### **ANTONIO**

A piteous tragedy, able to [make]  
An old man's eyes bloodshot.

### **LUSSURIOSO**

Oh!

### **VINDICI**

Look to my lord the duke! [Aside] A vengeance throttle him!  
[To the Fourth Man] Confess, thou murd'rous and [unhallowed] man,  
Didst thou kill all these?

### **FOURTH MAN**

None but the bastard I.

V.i. [A room in the palace]

The Revenger's Tragedy

**VINDICI**

How came the duke slain then?

**FOURTH MAN**

We found him so.

**LUSSURIOSO**

Oh, villain!

**VINDICI**

Hark!

**LUSSURIOSO**

Those in the masque did murder us.

**VINDICI**

Law you now, sir.

Oh, marble impudence! Will you confess now?

**FOURTH MAN**

[Sblood], 'tis all false!

**ANTONIO**

Away with that foul monster,  
Dipp'd in a prince's blood!

**FOURTH MAN**

Heart, 'tis a lie!

**ANTONIO**

Let him have bitter execution.

[Exit Fourth Man, guarded.]

**VINDICI**

[Aside] New marrow! No, I cannot be express'd!—  
How fares my lord the duke?

**LUSSURIOSO**

Farewell to all;  
He that climbs highest has the greatest fall.  
My tongue is out of office.

**VINDICI**

Air, gentlemen, air!  
[Whispering] Now thou'lt not prate on't, 'twas [Vindici] murd'ered thee—

**LUSSURIOSO**

Oh!

**VINDICI**

V.i. [A room in the palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

Murd'red thy father---

**LUSSURIOSO**

Oh!

**VINDICI**

And I am he.

Tell nobody. [Lussurioso dies.] So, so, the duke's departed.

**ANTONIO**

It was a deadly hand that wounded him.

The rest, ambitious who should rule and sway,

After his death were so made all away.

**VINDICI**

My lord was unlikely.

**HIPPOLITO**

Now the hope

Of Italy lies in your reverend years.

**VINDICI**

Your hair will make the silver age again,

When there was fewer but more honest men.

**ANTONIO**

The burden's weighty and will press age down;

May I so rule that heaven [may] keep the crown.

**VINDICI**

The rape of your good lady has been quitted

With death on death.

**ANTONIO**

Just is the law above.

But of all things it puts me most to wonder

How the old duke came murd'red.

**VINDICI**

Oh, my lord!

**ANTONIO**

It was the strangeliest carried, I not [heard]

Of the like.

**HIPPOLITO**

'Twas all done for the best, my lord.

**VINDICI**

All for your grace's good; we may be bold to speak it now,

'Twas somewhat witty carried, tho' we say it.

V.i. [A room in the palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

'Twas we two murd'red him.

**ANTONIO**

You two?

**VINDICI**

None else, i'faith, my lord; nay, 'twas well manag'd.

**ANTONIO**

Lay hands upon those villains!

[Guards seize Vindici and Hippolito.]

**VINDICI**

How? On us?

**ANTONIO**

Bear 'em to speedy execution.

**VINDICI**

Heart, was't not for your good, my lord?

**ANTONIO**

My good! Away with 'em! Such an old man as he!  
You that would murder him would murder me.

**VINDICI**

Is't come about?

**HIPPOLITO**

'Sfoot, brother, you begun.

**VINDICI**

May not we set as well as the duke's son?  
Thou hast no conscience: are we not reveng'd?  
Is there one enemy left alive amongst those?  
'Tis time to die when we are ourselves our foes.  
When murders shut deeds close, this curse does seal 'em:  
If none disclose 'em they themselves reveal 'em!  
This murder might have slept in tongueless brass  
But for ourselves, and the world died an ass.  
Now I remember too, here was Piato  
Brought forth a knavish sentence: no doubt, said he,  
But time will make the murderer bring forth himself.  
'Tis well he died; he was a witch.  
And now, my lord, since we are in forever,  
This work was ours which else might have been slipp'd,  
And if we list, we could have nobles clipp'd  
And go for less than beggars, but we hate  
To bleed so cowardly; we have enough. I'faith,  
We're well: our mother turn'd, our sister true,

V.i. [A room in the palace]

## The Revenger's Tragedy

We die after a nest of dukes. Adieu.

Exeunt [Vindici and Hippolito, guarded].

### **ANTONIO**

How subtly was that murder clos'd! Bear up  
Those tragic bodies; 'tis a heavy season:  
Pray heaven their blood may wash away all treason.

[Exeunt omnes.]

FINIS