

The Revenger's Tragedy

Thomas Middleton

Table of Contents

<u>The Revenger's Tragedy</u>	1
<u>Thomas Middleton</u>	2
<u>I.i. [Outside Vindici's house]</u>	3
<u>II.i. [Vindici's house]</u>	25
<u>III.i. The palace</u>	49
<u>IV.i. [The palace]</u>	70
<u>V.i. [A room in the palace]</u>	92

The Revenger's Tragedy

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[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: who'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–duchess 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-duckess' 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?

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'red 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