THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

A Record and Analysis of a Production

by

JANA M. VEVERKA

B.A., Bishop's University, 1968

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the Department of
THEATRE

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
APRIL, 1970
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of THEATRE

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date Dec 1, 70.
ABSTRACT

The Revenger's Tragedy, a Jacobean revenge tragedy by Cyril Tourneur, was produced and directed by Jana Veverka, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in the Department of Theatre of the University of British Columbia, at the Dorothy Somerset Studio Theatre, from October 15th to 18th, 1969. The following is a detailed record of that production, along with the director's analysis and interpretation of the script.

The Revenger's Tragedy was performed by a predominantly student cast, in costumes and setting by Michelle Bjornson, with music arranged and played by Jim Colby.

This record is divided into three main sections. The first is an essay in three parts, consisting respectively of a discussion of the historical background of the play including a brief biographical note on the author, a detailed analysis of the play with reference to the significant critical interpretations available and with reference to its position in the genre of Revenge Tragedy, and concludes with the directorial concept adopted for this production.

The essay is followed by a short bibliography which is not intended as a complete list of the works on or by Tourneur, but gives an indication of those which were taken into consideration during the preparation of this production.

The second section is made up of the prompt script of the production, showing cuts, blocking, significant
divisions of the play into units, and indication and light and
music cues. The script is followed by a unit by unit analysis
of each scene, briefly discussing the directorial approach
taken in terms of purpose, action, motivation, dominant emotions,
character dominance and particular difficulties involved.

The third section is made up of various tables, records and illustrations relating directly to the production. Included are lists of light cues, set changes, property and costume lists. Also included are transcripts of the music arranged for this production, samples of the programme and copies of the press reviews. The illustrations include colour photographs of the production, renderings of the sets, costumes and finally blueprints of the floor plan and working drawings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Essay</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt Script</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Analysis</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of Production</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Sheets</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music Cues</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Plot</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property List</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume Plot</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustrations</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production Photographs</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume Drawings:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vindice</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Duke</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Duchess</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lussurioso</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitioso</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castiza</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Drawings</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTORY ESSAY
On October 7th, 1607, George Eld:

Entred for his copies under the handes of Sir George Buck and the wardens. Twoo plaies the one called the revengers tragedie th other. A trick to catche the old one ....

in the Register of the Stationer's Company, the copybook of London publishers. No other contemporary allusion to the play or reference to its early stage history is known to survive, apart from this unusual double entry, and it provides the only reliable means of dating the play. Since the play depends heavily on Marston's satiric comedies, *The Malcontent* (1602 or 1603), *The Fawn* (1604 or 1606) and also has echoes of *King Lear* (1605) and is influenced by Jonson's *Volpone* (1606) it may be presumed that it was written somewhere among these dates, probably between the spring of 1606 and its entry in 1607.

*The Revenger's Tragedy* is the most important play of the surviving Elizabethan repertory to have its authorship in dispute. However, it is not within the scope of this thesis to attempt to determine its authorship or its precise date. Let it suffice to state that various scholars have, by both internal and external evidence, attributed the play concurrently to Marston, Webster, Middleton (the latter being the most important although he principally wrote city comedies rather than revenge dramas) and, of course, to Cyril Tourneur. This exasperating argument has not yet been concluded. For most students of the play, it is easier to reconcile the differences
between The Atheist's Tragedy, Tourneur's only uncontested play, and The Revenger's Tragedy, than to credit the latter to another author. In deference to modern publishing tradition, Tourneur's name appears on the title page of the play, and this writer accepts that tradition for the purpose of this paper.

Cyril Tourneur, then, was probably born between 1570 and 1580; it is not known where he was educated, but his first published work was The Transformed Metamorphosis which appeared in 1600, a satiric poem showing the influence of John Marston. Except for a small pamphlet, nothing is known of his writing until The Revenger's Tragedy. In 1609 A Funeral Poem Upon the Death of the most Worthy and True Soldier Sir Francis Vere was published. In 1611 The Atheist's Tragedy appeared. The Nobleman was published soon after and was also soon lost. Several more poems and pamphlets appeared, none of much note before the author's death in October, 1625.

The sources for the play are wide and varied. They range from Heliodorus' Aethiopian History (translated by Underdowne, 1587) from which can be traced the scene where Lussurioso forces his way into the Ducal bedchamber, and Guicciardini's History of Italy where the plot for Ambitioso and Supervacuo to overtake the dukedom may have originated. Whatever historical material Tourneur used, he handled very freely. The Italian setting Tourneur employed, more brilliantly perhaps than that of any other play in the revenge genre, was almost a convention of the seventeenth century stage. The
"Italy" of *The Revenger's Tragedy* is the mythical decadent "Italy" which fascinated the Elizabethan imagination and was as Ross says, "The already symbolic 'Italy' of perverted sophistication and moral corruption, of aesthetic depravity, poetic treachery, abandoned sensuality, violence and vendetta."

The complexity of Tourneur's representation of this evil world is so complete that we accept the consequences of entering into a "City of Dreadful Night" and find a world vibrant with imaginative horror.

Tourneur is most indebted to the earlier plays of the English dramatic tradition, especially those which, like Marston, used the Kydian-Senecan revenge motif woven with the corrupt satiric intensity of the Italianate setting. Another important influence on Tourneur's writing was exerted by Ben Jonson, and his creation of a dramaturgy based on his theory of humours. The names Tourneur uses for his characters - Lussurioso, Vindice, Ambitioso, Supervacuo, etc. - clearly define them as being dominated by a particular quality, much in the way that Jonson's humour characters are possessed by an excess of one or other "humour". This also accounts for some of the comic, even satiric aspects of Tourneur's characters in this play - they have become so obsessed with a particular quality, with Ambition, with Vengeance, or otherwise, that they become absurd, and Tourneur clearly intends us to laugh, as did Jonson, at such ludicrous rigidity.
A final significant influence on Tourneur was that of the mediaeval Morality Play tradition. As Salinger points out:

The *Revenger's Tragedy* is the last as well as the most brilliant attempt to present the emotional conflicts of Renaissance society within the framework of moral allegory.

and the play reveals this connection on every level: in the abstract representation of the characters, in the names he chooses - Vindice (Vengeance), Castiza (Chastity) and so on; in the allegoric action that is evident when Chastity, the daughter of Grace, is threatened, in the Dance of Death, in the use of Vindice as moralizer on the action, and so on. That Tourneur's roots went deeply into the Renaissance past can little be doubted.

Tourneur lived in a time where conditions were unsteady and the social and economic as well as philosophic ideals were in a state of flux. Una Ellis-Fermor characterizes the mood of the drama during this period into three phases roughly covering the periods from the beginning of Elizabethan drama to 1598, from about 1598 to 1610 and from 1610 to near the end of the reign of James I. Briefly, the first mood is characterized by its faith in mankind, and by its vitality corresponding directly to the rising of a prosperous society. The plays of this period are represented by the early Shakespeare, in Greene and Peele, and of course Kyd and the early Marlowe. The second mood is a period of despondency or anxiety, resulting partially from the influence of Machiavellian cynicism, and
partially from the apprehensions and disillusionment that spread through the social and political life after the death of Elizabeth and the instability of James' first few years on the throne. The third phase is one of increasing equilibrium, marked by the resolution in Shakespeare's later plays. There is a note of serenity as well as indifference in the plays of this period, revealing an age that has lost contact with catastrophe. Thus we can see that *The Revenger's Tragedy* belongs to the middle genre and reflects the mood of disillusionment so evident in the attitude of the time.

The quality which removes Tourneur from his contemporaries is his total disinterest in political themes and problems. *The Revenger's Tragedy* lacks even the shadowy political background which provides a framework of great events for the sensationalism of *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The Jew of Malta*. Like Chapman's heroes and Jonson's Cicero, Vindice is pitted against a decadent society, but one that is corrupted by perverted sensual appetites, not by political opportunism or tyranny; its villains are, for the most part, ambitious only in their lusts. Vindice, like Bussy d'Ambois, is an exile from society who insists on virtuous action in an evil milieu, and he must compromise his actions to gain the revenge uppermost in his mind.

In this play, Tourneur's moral argument and his plot are one. This statement can be explained by looking at the attitudes of Tourneur and some of his contemporaries.
It is fairly safe to say that they were interested more in an overall moral statement than in individualized characters. Usually only with playwrights like Shakespeare, and occasionally Webster and Middleton, is a moral vision expressed in terms of characters who might be real people in situations which we can understand and identify with, and we cannot hope to understand the horrors of Tourneur while watching or studying his plays as realistic accounts of life. The extreme horror is simply too richly portrayed and creates an aesthetic distance of its own.

Although the most important writer of tragedy during this era, was undoubtedly William Shakespeare, his view of the world was not that of the early 17th century dramatists. The Jacobean found it difficult to accept without question the view of man's position in the universe which gives Shakespeare's tragedies their most significant form. Shakespeare overall seems to exemplify the optimistic Christian humanism of the early Renaissance, which stressed the dignity of man and the providence of God and resulted always in some sort of reconciliation between the forces of good and evil. This attitude, however, quickly developed into a period of doubt, confusion and profound pessimism. The Jacobean dramatists do not reflect the new scientific optimism of Bacon, but more generally reflect the uncertainty of an age no longer able to believe the old ideals, searching almost frantically for new ones to replace them.
various ways to discover some meaning in human suffering, some kind of affirmation which can make life possible in a world which seems to give reason only for despair. D. C. Allen has written that whereas human suffering in the Middle Ages could be accepted as the road to heaven, the Jacobean era had no such certainty. Their mediaeval forebears had, through the philosophy of Aquinas, a satisfying synthesis of these conflicting modes of thought. The failure of the Renaissance philosophers to create such a synthesis contributed to the pessimism of the age. This failure of a synthesis created a relationship with our time, and gives Jacobean drama the peculiar sense of immediacy it has today.

It was thus partly why the writers of the Jacobean period tended to fall back upon the mediaeval motifs. Tourneur's plays are witnesses to this fact, and he employs the weapons developed by mediaeval and Renaissance satirists, based upon the assumption of a decaying universe and a corrupt and degenerate humanity. He uses the symbols traditionally associated with mediaeval asceticism: the human skull, the charnel house, the seven deadly sins parading across the stage, the denouncement of lust and gluttony and so on. He created in fact a world whose evils are drawn with brutal exaggeration. Tourneur is primarily interested in the shaping of his particular story so that its parts will give expression to a moral statement, and by making characters stand for particular moral positions, he creates a conflict which may be resolved.
The major body of drama in the Elizabethan era was not universally orthodox in its moral outlook. Christopher Marlowe, the most significant of the sceptics, had already questioned the order and perfection of the universe, and even in Faustus the price of knowledge is damnation.

Una Ellis-Fermor has indicated that the Marlovian type of drama comes to dominate the Jacobean era, with its steadily increasing sense of human limitations and its tone of human defeat. She has seen this "mood of spiritual despair" as the product of Marlowe's continuing exploration of the political system of Niccolo Machiavelli.7

The impact of his system on the Elizabethans came indirectly and imperfectly, and the ridiculous stage figure of the Machiavellian villain was a distortion in values of any of Machiavelli's thoughts or ideas. The spreading of Machiavellian materialism, emphasized by Marlowe's tragic thought added to the already existent preoccupation with death and created the macabre heritage of Jacobean drama.

The greatest plays of the years 1600 to 1612 form a group reflecting this mood in one form or another. Troilus and Cressida, Hamlet, The Malcontent, Measure for Measure, Volpone, Lear, Macbeth, Timon of Athens, The Revenger's Tragedy, The Alchemist, and The White Devil, to mention a few. The fear of doom impending upon a once great civilization, a fear similar to ours, caused the Jacobean writers to seek in their
The Atheist's Tragedy carries this idea to extreme. In the far superior The Revenger's Tragedy the moral substance of the play is more perfectly conveyed in the total dramatic structure. Tourneur relies heavily upon his poetic imagery to emphasize his themes and to establish the tone of his plays. Nevertheless, the play is a masterpiece of mood and atmosphere creating a hypnotic fusion of horror and black humour.

II

The Revenger's Tragedy is one of a number of plays written in the Jacobean era which came to be known as the "tragedy of blood". More specifically, it belongs to that peculiar Elizabethan-Jacobean genre of plays called Revenge Tragedy. The whole mood and atmosphere of these plays are aptly described by Horatio at the end of Hamlet while he looks at the bloody mess about him:

...... so shall you hear
Of carnal bloody and unnatural acts
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause
And in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventor's head.

The Revenger's Tragedy with its appropriate name falls well into this description, even insofar as the "hero" is led off stage at the end to his own death. The play, needless to say, centres around revenge. Vindici wants revenge primarily for the murder of his mistress, Gloriana,
and secondly, and only incidentally, (since he mentions it once in an aside to his mother), for the social displacement of his father and his death of the 'nobleman's consumption'. Hippolito somehow appears to be morally obligated to help Vindice but rarely states his feelings. The Duchess passionately desires revenge against the Duke for not setting her youngest son free from his trial for the rape of Antonio's wife. Ambitioso and Supervacuo want some kind of secure position at the Court, and plot to get rid of those standing in their way. Both the Duke and Lussurioso cannot be controlled in their lust and destroy those who give in and those who do not. Spurio, the bastard son, hates everyone and would kill them all if he could. This revenge motif which figures in almost every part of the plot works, ironically enough, against Vindice and Hippolito. The vengeance of Vindice and Hippolito ultimately means no more and lasts no longer than the petty vengeances of the secondary characters. It is hard to differentiate between their "minute" of vengeance, and the "bewitching minute" of virtue's ravishment or the momentary realization of the several would-be dukes of becoming "dukes in a minute". Each of these transitory moments of triumph become moments in which "honest salvation is betray'd to sin".

Tourneur's preoccupation with the revenge theme is a reflection of the time. The age lived in a tension between two conflicting attitudes centred on the notion of revenge. The most obvious conflict resulted from the clash between the
moralists who maintained that private revenge was unlawful and un-Christian, and the individual who felt he had to redress a wrong done to him. Blood revenge for murder especially was not in itself condemned by the Elizabethans and Jacobes, for unrevenged murder was the ultimate reflection on one's honour. The revenge theme was complicated however, and enriched by another strand of ideas and attitudes, mainly deriving from the popular misconceptions about Italy. But this has already been dealt with earlier in the section concerning the Machiavellian figure in Jacobean drama. Part of the fascination seems to have stemmed from the sheer mechanics of the means by which violent crimes are committed. And the audiences, used to bear pits as well as the theatres, were even less squeamish about the Grand Guignol effects than we are today. The other aspect of the revenge motif which presents an interesting contrast is the relationship between the violent display of action and the world of the viewers. The violence was used as an end in itself, creating a mild form of escapism. In The Revenger's Tragedy the violence serves some purpose outside itself, its dramatic interest being its effect on the moral stature of the characters involved.

The main action of the play is as follows. Vindice, with the help of Hippolito, goes into the service of Lussurioso, and still in his disguise as 'Piato' persuades his mother to bring the daughter to Court. The Duchess's younger
son, has in the meantime been on the trial for the rape of Lord Antonio's wife. The Duke merely postpones the verdict, and the Duchess, eager to avenge the Duke's refusal to set her son free, begins to make advances to Spurio, the Duke's bastard son, whom she has always desired. Spurio, although disliking his stepmother, complies with her desires, in order to repay his father for his false birth. The Duchess's two sons realize what is happening and decide to stop this incestuous affair. They also plot to release their brother and in the process to kill Lussurioso, the next heir to the throne. In their haste, however, the plans get confused and they order their own brother's death. Eventually, in a bitter and cynical scene, Vindice and Hippolito murder the Duke. Vindice takes on a new disguise, is ordered by Lussurioso to kill Piato (in fact himself), manages to save his sister's honour, and superficially his mother's, and in a grand finale, succeeds in killing off the rest of the Court in a terrible court masque. As Vindice is being led out at the end, his final words reveal the total commitment he has given to his revenge; his life is over and he is almost flippant in his final speech to the remaining few on stage:

We have enough
I'faith we're well: our mother turn'd, our sister true
We die after a nest of dukes - adieu. (V.iii)

Structurally, the play is made up of the main plot, that of Vindice in various disguises acting out his revenge, and the sub-plots which revolve around the intrigues at Court. Throughout the play, Hippolito acts as a go-between for Vindice
theme and mood of the play in his character and this mercuric quality seen in both is part of the fascination he has for us.

As the play opens, Vindice acts as satiric master of ceremonies presenting the dumb show of the royal family led by torchlight. In short harsh epigrams, Vindice etches their characters, and then on their exit, falls into a soliloquy. The moods he goes through in this first speech already indicate that he has a tendency to sudden shifts in emotion. After the opening harangue on the vice figures, Vindice subsides into a bitter meditation on his lost love. As he gets more and more involved with the thought of her, the idea of revenge takes over, and he becomes almost gay, as he sharply visualizes "Revenge" leading his enemies into a cauldron of hell-fire. Theatrically the scene is effective as well - Vindice darkly dressed, alone on stage lit by torchlight, talking to the skull of his dead love.

While Vindice is still in this gleeful mood, he is joined by his brother and their conversation proceeds at a brisk pace:

Hippolito: Still sighing o'er death's vizard?

Vindice: Brother, welcome! What comfort bring'st thou? How go things at Court?

Hippolito: In silk and silver brother: never braver.

Vindice: Puh! Thou play'st upon my meaning.... Are we happy yet? Thy wrongs and mine are for one scabbard fit.
and the Court, becoming a part of both worlds and acting as a link. Through the use of ironic reversals of intent and consequently of expectation, the plot becomes extremely complex. Tourneur uses parallel scenes consequently to re-iterate and comment on the central revengers' drama. This is best pointed out in the scene between Ambitioso and Supervacuo in which they feign pleading for Lussurioso's life and the results are disastrous events leading to their brother's death. Another brief scene in which they resolve to end their mother's incestuous adultery is juxtaposed with Vindice's and Hippolito's enforced conversion of their mother turned bawd. The final and most theatrical parallel occurs with the two sets of murderous masques at the end of the play - one motivated by revenge, one by ambition.

When we turn to the play itself, we cannot help but be struck by the alternating changes of mood and pace, between energetic high-spirited action and brooding slow paced scenes of meditation on death, revenge and evil. This disturbing quality is reflected in the traditional images of grinning skull and capering skeleton. This dichotomy of rhythm is also seen in Vindice himself, now the high-spirited witty deviser of schemes, now the melancholy mourner "still sighing o'er death's vizard". His rapid shifts from witty fop to rustic scholar, from observer to participator and instigator, indicate his change of roles from satirist to tragedian. He embodies the
Hippolito: It may prove happiness.

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

Hippolito: Give me your hearing then.....

(I.i)

and as they plot the next few lines, we get the feeling of conspiracy which begins to permeate the whole play. The mother and sister enter and the two brothers immediately adopt a pose:

Vindice: We must coin.
      Women are apt, you know, to take false money.

(I.i)

Vindice's cynicism is openly evident in this little scene with his mother. He doesn't trust her, he mocks her with his satiric wit and actually appears to speak aside when conversing with her. His need to prove the only two true creatures in the play false, reveals his great need to be absolute in his rightness and to elevate his own sense of justice. The scene is a smooth one, but not a very comfortable one, for we begin to get an indication of what is in store. In fact, the whole scene is shaped by Tourneur to shed light on the rest of the play. The very rhythm of the scene is significant in this respect. It begins in meditative stillness then as another character enters the intrigue begins and with the entrance of more and more characters the action of the play mounts to greater complexity and speed.
The central character in the play is of course Vindice. His role, however, is not that of the "hero", his sympathy comes only from the fact that he is the least evil in the play, or possibly the most understandable, since from the start we are asked to share his indignation provoked by the wrongs against him, thus he has our sympathy. Vindice is however not a Hamlet-like figure, although the opening scene with the skull recalls the graveyard scene of Hamlet. In Hamlet, as in other plays of the time where skull scenes were used to "spice up" the action, the scenes are used as relief, they are neither necessary nor climactic to the action. In The Revenger's Tragedy, however, the skull appears at the start as a vital piece of imagery, reminiscent of deeds to come and deeds past, and serves as the climax of the action in a later scene.

Nor does Vindice wind through the Hamlet-like abodesques of melancholy thought; rather he is directly vindictive (hence his name) and his mind is full of action, formed from an insane and fiendish purpose. One excellent example of his manner of doing things is the scene where Vindice brings the "lady" for the Duke who is to meet him in the hunting lodge:

(Enter Vindice with the masked skull of his love dressed in Tires).

Vindice: Madam, his grace will not be absent long. 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. 

(III.v.)

A speech full of insinuations and sexual overtones, but besides this it is also very bitter. For while Vindice has this speech in which he mocks women's virtue, he is holding the skull of his betrothed whom the old Duke poisoned. The scene, while theatrically effective, is also very ghoulish. Vindice's revenge on the Duke consists of using Gloriana's skull to seduce the Duke to his death - the "royal lecher" is caught in his own trap. In carrying out his demonically fitting vengeance, making a poisoner/rapist Duke enact his embracing of death through lust, Vindice turns his lady from chaste victim into whore and murderess.

He does from the onset manipulate plot and counter-plot; his very disguises enforcing the symbolism of impermanence and change which infuse the play, leading to a gradual decay of everything in Vindice's world. The theme of transformation is relevant to all the actions of the play. For instance, in Act I, Scene III:

Vindice: What brother, am I far enough from myself? 
asks Vindice, the new Piato in disguise. Later, Hippolito described him to Lussurioso in terms reflecting the superficial changes in Vindice:
Hippolito:  
... and if Time  
    Had so much hair, I should take him for Time,  
    He is so near kin to this present minute.  

(I. iii)

Vindice becomes the cataloguer of Time noting its surface devastations:

Vindice:  
    I have been witness  
        To the surrenders of a thousand virgins,  
        And not so little;  
    I have seen patrimonies washed apieces,  
    Fruit-fields turned 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.  

(I.iii)

His rapid changes of disguise keep pace with the rapid tempo of the play, and in the quick economical verse Tourneur uses. T. S. Eliot has noted this rapidity of movement.

"His phrases seem to contract the images in his effort to say everything in the least space, the shortest time".  

Not only is Vindice adept at fooling the Court - he also deludes his mother, and convinces her to become a bawd to her own daughter. The wavering of Gratiana into another, more unnatural mother, re-emphasizes the change motif. Castiza points this up in her lines:

The world's so changed, one shape into another  
It is a wise child now that knows her mother.  

(II.i)

Almost as if he did not believe any virtue existed, Vindice is driven to prove the corruptibility of his mother and sister.
The falling of the mother almost proves to him that women's frailty is indeed a crumbling scaffold ready to topple at the slightest vibration. Yet it is important to note that Vindice's purpose never changes, nor does his inner character, both become stronger and more directional as the play progresses.

It is Castiza who provides the frame of reference for the moral argument of the play. Several critics, such as Irving Ribner, have overemphasized Castiza as the exponent of true goodness and purity in the play. To see Castiza as "a rare Phoenix" and to say "by her rejection of the world, Castiza stands for heaven, and it is the reality of heaven which makes meaningful the scorn for the world which the play espouses" is to oversimplify the play and to take away from the rich ambivalence in moral stature of the characters - whether anyone is really unambiguously 'good' or 'bad' is essential to the atmosphere and feeling of the play as a whole, and to Tourneur's purpose.

Ribner, for instance, reads the lines of 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.

(II.i)

as equating with the mediaeval notion of "holy poverty" and thus making honesty always poor as well as rare. In this play it is. However, to make Castiza into a solitary figure of light in the play, and to make her all good is to deny also
seeing that poverty sometimes wages war with the moral vision governing it. In the case of Castiza it is to miss that side of her character with which we best identify - that bit of cynicism which gives her a sourness and indeed a strictness which takes her a step further than the one-dimensional allegorical figure, which Ribner seems willing to impose on her. Her very rationalization in the lines creates an almost defence-like speech as though she were looking for an excuse:

Castiza: 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 impoverished hell.

(II.i)

Her tone is certainly at times somewhat self-righteous. Relatively speaking, her unflinching character does provide sharp contrast to all the other variables in the play. The character that contrasts with Castiza most in terms of constancy is of course her mother. Gratiana must surely be one of the more distasteful mothers in the history of the English theatre. As she becomes more and more involved with the pleasures of the palace, her arguments against her daughter's chastity become more and more pronounced. The passages in which Vindice describes the palace have a fantastic underworld quality to them, speeding up the rhythm towards the corrupt Court:
Vindice:  O 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, music, 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.

(II.i)

The mother has one foot in the Court already and she will not
be brought back from the pleasures there by the obstinacy of her
daughter.  It is not until she is faced with her sons' daggers
at her breast that she changes her mind.  She is adamant only
that Vindice himself could have convinced her and tells him
that she will not be tempted again.  Most critics tend to
point out the true repentance of Gratiana as the return of good
in the country paralleling the take-over of Antonio.  I feel
that this is an optimistic interpretation for two reasons.  What
we have seen of Gratiana's character does not permit us to believe
that she is either truthful or particularly honest.  In the
first scene, she appears as a gossip, wanting the news from
Court and getting from Hippolito the most sensational tidbit.

Gratiana:  What news from Court, son Carlo?

Hippolito:  Faith, mother
'Tis whispered there the Duchess' youngest son
Has played a rape on Lord Antonio's wife.

(I.i)

She is easily seduced by Vindice's persuasions later on and by
the money and jewels he brings.  He tells her:
Vindice: 'Tis no shame to be bad, because 'tis common.

(II.i)

And she replies:

Gratiana: Ay, that's the comfort on't.

(II.i)

Vindice has indeed set "golden spurs" on his mother and "set her to a gallop in a thrice". When he later confronts her with his deed, she must of course recant and she does so wittily enough, saying "no tongue but yours could have bewitched me so". And so it only remains for the mother to convince her daughter that she was wrong. The plot gets more complicated however, because in the meantime Castiza has decided to say that she will go to give her mother one more chance to redeem herself. The point that I am making is that in no way can the recantation of Gratiana be complete without making her character unbelievable and either only allegorical or melodramatic or both. She recants simply to save her neck. With the bare blade at her throat and with Vindice confronting her with her foul deed, she will say anything, and she does. If she regrets anything, it must be that it was Vindice and not a real 'Piato' who came from the Court.

By the same token, Antonio's ascent or take-over at the end is not completely indicative of a new order imposed on the kingdom. This is seen simply from his lines:

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

(V.iii)
Vindice and Hippolito should justifiably be sentenced. It is ironic, however, that Antonio's sentences come right after he has called the murders acts of heaven (after all, it is these "acts" which put him in the position he is in now). But the lines point out his fear for his life, which can now be likened to the old Duke's. The pattern of retribution which has been repeated throughout the play is once more presented at the end creating a sort of dramatic irony or vicious circle.

This brings us to a related problem in the play. Some critics have argued that in the second half of *The Revenger's Tragedy* there is a restoration of morality in the world of the play, which I find hard to accept. The so-called 'reformation' of Gratiana mentioned is as I see it a clever escape from death on her part for the reasons mentioned earlier. Neither Vindice nor Hippolito face their death willingly, nor do they accept their wrong acts as worthy of retribution - they pay their penalty simply because they have no choice. Having created their own justice during the course of the play they cannot see what they have done wrong.

There is in the play an emphasis upon time and change as the destroyers of life which unites the various frustrations and ironic reversals which constitute the action. It creates a total impression of impermanence and the futility of earthly existence.
Ambitioso: I see now there's nothing sure in mortality but mortality....

(III. vi)

The last scene of the play ironically points up this statement when there is almost no-one left alive. This feeling is so strong that it overcomes any hope of Antonio's ability to restore morality to the chaos on stage.

Each of the play's sub-plots involves an ironic reversal which illustrates the futility of worldly plans. There is a feeling of furious haste as Junior is led to his execution and in short quick scenes the situation is set up and is completed. "There's no delaying time" says the officer, repeating a major theme. It is implicit in the ironic predicament to Vindice when he is commissioned to kill himself, for to live is to kill oneself with the passing of time.

Vindice: Now nine years' vengeance crowd into a minute.

(III.v.)

cries Vindice, as he prepares to kill the Duke. The lesser ironies of the play, Spurio's affair with the Duchess and Lussurioso's attempt to thwart it, the counter-plot of Ambitioso and Supervacuo with the resulting death of Junior, all reflect the same motifs of time and impermanence.

Spurio, the bastard son, who has no position at Court, and desperately wants one, consents to his stepmother's passion. Yet, even while kissing her, his mind is working
against her:

Spurio: Stepmother, I consent to thy desires;  
I love thy mischief well, but I hate thee.  

(I. ii)

He takes his bitterness out against his father for having  
made him a bastard and so he consents to cuckold him. He  
plans to get rid of the Duchess's sons, and then:

Spurio: As for my brother, .......  
..... I'll loose my days upon him, hate all I, ...  

(I, ii)

Indeed not only Spurio but everybody else in the play seems  
also to "hate all".

The evil in the play is centred around a few major  
vices; greed, jealousy and lust, and of course the ambiguous  
vice - revenge. Sometimes these are combined to create a  
truly grotesque character, as in the case of the Duke. It is  
difficult to agree with T. S. Eliot, who insists that the  
playwright expresses "cynicism, the loathing and disgust of  
humanity", and is the result of an adolescent's "inner world  
of nightmare, some horror beyond words". Certainly this is  
a romantic point of view to take and it would be nice to think  
of Tourneur recreating his nightmares and fantasies for us  
in the world of his play. But that is really too farfetched.  
For one thing he was no adolescent when the play was published.  
For another, from what we know of his life, he was a soldier  
and royal messenger-cum-spy. The setting of the play for  
instance, is a typical example of the Italianate convention
in revenge tragedies of the period. There is no "inner world of nightmare" here. In a sense Tourneur has followed a pre-set formula for the play and with variations and combinations has created a play sufficiently different to be of historical interest yet sufficiently similar to others to be part of the genre of revenge drama. Certainly the world he created was more intense, more loathsome possibly than some of the more famous ones such as Hamlet, and yet other examples of the genre such as Webster's White Devil exceed Tourneur's play in horror and grotesquerie. Thus I feel that we can attribute Tourneur's world in The Revenger's Tragedy to his imagination and playwriting abilities rather than to his adolescent outpourings. Besides, the humour of the play is far too important to ignore and is obviously deliberate. Tourneur often builds up a scene just to undercut it by a single remark.

One such example is the scene immediately after the Duke has been discovered dead, and the Court gathers in feigned horror at the cry. Spurio then walks on, notices the corpse of his father and says:

Spurio: Old Dad dead? ...  

(V. i)

Similarly, the first scene between 'Piato' and Lussurioso is
a humorous one, in that Vindice sets up the scene, brilliantly playing into Lussuriosos's hands, the latter thinking that he is in control, and the scene ending with a bitter invective by Vindice on the Court scenes he has witnessed:

Lussurioso: What has been?
   Of what profession?
Vindice: A bone-setter.
Lussurioso: A bone-setter?
Vindice: A bawd my lord,
   One that sets bones together.

(I. iii)

This scene and others like it is full of satiric comedy.

Despite the view that Tourneur had of the world, his approach was not unique for the Jacobean audience; they were used to dramatized incest, murder and other sensational happenings. We must not forget that Tourneur was writing at the peak of the era of Jacobean decadence, nor was he unaware of the effect that such devices would have on his audience. Without doubt, however, he created a play whose world is filled with grotesquerie yet unique in its fascination and undercut by an almost cynical sense of humour throughout.
Far from being a pure tragedy, The Revenger’s Tragedy does contain some elements of the "tragic" in the classic sense. Tourneur has created in characters an obsessive intensity unequalled in the Elizabethan drama. This intensity, this determined passion on the part of the characters creates their tragic flaws, but at the same time takes them out of the realm of the tragic. This is especially notable in the character of Vindice. The traditional tragic hero, generally isolated from the rest of society for some reason, is pulled down at the end like a stag by wolves. He may be innocent and courageous and brought down by fate, or his enemies, or brought down by his hybris and harmatia. Yet in the case of Vindice, his passion so rules him that he cannot remain isolated and it forces him to act as cruelly as the others in the play, yet always for reasons of "justice". He is oblivious to the change that takes place in him and consequently he has absolutely no struggle with his conscience. What is more, he accepts his sentence at the end with no realization on his part of why he is being imprisoned; he has justified his life and his actions. The tragedy therefore, if we can call it that, is our own realization of Vindice's submission to his desires and his inability to see himself as he really is.

The characters of the play vary in complexity and
plausibility. They may be distortions, grotesques, and at times almost simple caricatures of humanity, but they are all distorted to scale. Hence the entire action of the play which is "no common action" has its own self-sufficient reality. In other words, Tourneur has created a total world of his own within the play.

When we first see Vindice, we see a man embittered by the society around him. He has many reasons to be bitter, primarily because of his lost love; however, when we realize that he has waited nine years to take his revenge on the old Duke, it must be seen that he is not a simple hot-blooded revenger, but one for whom revenge is a way of life.

The activity around which much of the action of the play centres is that of waiting. The Duke and Lussurioso wait for their virgins, Spurio waits to kill the Duke, Ambitioso and Supervacuo wait for some kind of chance to establish themselves at Court, the Duchess waits to cuckold the Duke, and so on. All the desires are small however, when compared to those of Vindice. They can be overcome in a relatively short space of time, but those of Vindice take nine years to finalize. During those nine years he has had a lot of time to think and plan, and to become obsessed with his ideas. Inevitably, these ideas must have taken on new shapes and forms. At first, when Gloriana was murdered, Vindice must have been as hot-blooded as most youths and eager for instant revenge. This would have made
an equally interesting but different play. Tourneur, however, chose to make his hero wait nine years before acting. What has he gained? In the interim, Vindice has changed his perspective. The prime motive for revenge is still his mistress, she triggers off the initial response within him, yet he now has another reason to pursue his goal. That is, he wishes to restore morality and justice to a world which he feels no longer can claim to have these virtues. It is evident from the very opening scene that Vindice has not been a mourning, melancholy figure in seclusion, quite the contrary. He has been totally aware of what the Court has been up to and has been waiting for a time to make his move. Even at the start he spies on the procession and his lines indicate that he is quite aware of each of their vices. Because Vindice has had these nine years in which to think about the evils of society, he can think of little else. Although he believes his mother and sister to be chaste, he is not content until he has tested their virtue, and when his mother succumbs to his flattery, it is as though he expected it. Vindice feels that he knows the world and has therefore appointed himself saviour. His absolute rightness precludes any insecurity on his part, and it is perhaps this quality or strength which Hippolito follows.

Vindice's shortcomings therefore stem directly from this awareness of the corruption around him, because although he is aware of his surroundings, he is blind to himself.
Hippolito sees this but it is too late. These nine years, then, which figure so predominantly in the play, are very important in the development of Vindice's character, for they show him to be not a mere blood revenger, but rather a man who feels he has the weight of justice on his shoulders and feels he has to disperse it accordingly. The psychological complexity of this character is the base on which the play stands.

By the end of the third act, we begin to realize the dedication with which Vindice is approaching his self-appointed mission. Having rid the Court of one evil element, the Duke, he feels he must not stop until he has cleared away the rest of the evil characters. His revenge therefore takes on a very different form. At the start, he was avenging his mistress as well as the lack of justice shown towards her murder. By the end of the third act he has decided to continue his course of action.

There is very little way we can now fully sympathize with Vindice, for he begins to get carried away with his passion for justice. Thus, almost inverting the traditional morality play scheme, virtue parades around as vice and finally there is little differentiation between the two. Vindice represents the inevitable fate of man who takes it upon himself to perform the justice of God and embraces evil in a vain attempt to destroy evil. Vindice is almost the tragic hero of the play. He believes so strongly in his own sense of justice and in his ability to restore morality to the society, that he is caught
in his own web and murders in order to fulfil his goal. By the end of the play, when he is led off to be killed, he must be completely surprised at the outcome, since he has in his own eyes, succeeded in his attempt. His naivety about his final confession reveals this attitude and perhaps gives us a clue as to why he is so flippant at the end.

Unlike Hippolito, who has found an occupation, albeit an unpleasant one, Vindice does absolutely nothing before the play begins. The relationship between the two is a strange one. Hippolito shares his brother's confidence, and helps him in everything, yet rarely initiates an action. His speeches show him to be an accomplished Court gentleman, ready to please his lord, but how much he deliberates his actions is a matter for debate. Indeed, one tends to forget about him when discussing the play, yet without him it is doubtful whether Vindice would have accomplished so much so well. It must be seen that Hippolito is completely aware of what is happening in Vindice's mind. We can see this by examining some of his earlier speeches. In the first scene, where he first meets with Vindice, he teases Vindice for a number of lines, before he tells him the news. Later, in the same scene, in much the same manner, Vindice sets the scene with Lussurioso later on. Again, Hippolito intimates to Vindice that Lussurioso would like a "base coin'd pander" and Vindice takes up the idea and agrees to play the role. Again, later in the play, it is Hippolito who tells Vindice of the affair between Spurio and the Duchess and thus
motivates the action that ensues.

Hippolito, on a minor scale, is a spy at the Court. He skulks around the corridors, listens behind pillars and takes advantage of any situation. He has made himself indispensable to Lussurioso and is in effect a dangerous man to have around. Throughout the play, no-one ever suspects him of foul play. But he is the activating agent of many of the events and actions in the play.

Two basic assumptions were made in the interpretation of the relationship between the two brothers, the main one being that there was an inter-dependence between the two and a mutual faith and trust, and the other that Vindice being the strongest and convinced of his ultimate rightness, could persuade Hippolito that his way was the right one. With his blind passion, he could easily convince Hippolito to accept his plans. Hippolito's last line points this up as well, when he says:

Hippolito: 'Sfoot brother, you begun.

(V.iii)

The characters of the Court who make up the decadent social world of the play form a pyramid of corruption. The Duke and Duchess as leaders or rulers of the society are the most corrupt. In the second scene of the play, the hierarchy of this pyramid is revealed to us. The Duke is holding trial for the Duchess's youngest son, who has committed a crime of which the Duke has been guilty many times - that of rape. The Duchess ironically feels that because of her son's position he should
be above blame.

The tenseness of the Court scene reveals the discomfort of the Court characters in each other's presence. Each character seems to have some influence or connection with each of the others - all are interconnected in a web of power and corruption which culminates in the Duke. At the beginning of the play, the Duke is in control and the pyramid of corruption is solid. But as we see in this scene, each character is waiting and watching for his chance to strike, to upset the balance and seize a higher position in the pyramid. One gets the feeling they would all be happier hiding in corners and spying on each other. This is the flavour which pervades the play, the complete and utter distrust of each character in the play for everyone else.

Ambitioso and Supervacuo as befits their names are ambitious and vacuous in the extreme. Although seldom out of each other's company for long, they plot even against each other during their asides, revealing their lust for power. Their craving for the throne is outmatched only by Spurio's, whose claim is even more tenuous than theirs. It is the ultimate irony of the play, however, that no-one is successful in their attempt at revenge or the throne. Spurio fails in his attempt to kill Lussurioso. Ambitioso and Supervacuo have their brother killed by mistake. Lussurioso does not get Castiza and almost kills his father. Gratiana never gets to Court and almost gets killed by her sons. Junior gets
executed by mistake, and an innocent lord gets put to death for telling the truth.

In the final scene where they all plan to take final revenge, they all get killed. It is only Vindice, who, in his own eyes, emerges successful. He feels he has done away with the corrupt Court and thus willingly dies since it is done. All are destroyed in their attempts to control the pyramid of corruption. Nobody wins.

The characters of Graziana and Castiza have already been dealt with sufficiently to show their relationship to this world of corruption. Regardless of the coldness and bitterness of Castiza, she still stands out as the cleanest character in the play. Her virtue is her own, and although she develops into a cold figure, Tourneur seems to prefer it to the corrupt passion of the Court. In fact, her iciness creates a contrast with the decay and putrefaction one associates with the Duke and his Court.

Junior, the youngest son, appears youthful and sympathetic at first, but as the play progresses he is seen to be as much a part of the corrupt Court world as anyone else. Having committed a rape on Lord Antonio's wife, he is still nothing less than cocksure and brash, at his trial. A weak, snivelling brat on the inside, he is brazen and a bully on the outside. In his final scene, when he is faced with death, he becomes frantic and breaks down. Void of honour or courage, he cannot accept his death until he has cursed his brothers.
The character of Lussurioso is perhaps the most important within the realm of the Court. Although the Duke remains as the ultimate symbol of decay, we see little of him. Lussurioso appears as a younger version of the same character. The old Duke's worst deeds have been committed before the play begins, but we see Lussurioso in the midst of his sins. Lussurioso desires the young virgin sister of Hippolito and Vindice and will stop at nothing to get her. His lust is overwhelming and he is not above bribery or murder to get his will. In his first scene with 'Piato' when they are feeling each other out, the circumlocutions around the subject are significant of the way Lussurioso approaches things. In his scene with Vindice as a scholar embittered by poverty, his true hypocritical nature comes out when Vindice describes the picture he sees:

Vindice: "A usuring Father to be boiling in hell, and his Son and heir with a Whore dancing over him."

(IV. ii)

There is not any love lost between the members of this family as we have seen earlier. The royal brothers would gladly kill one another to get more power. This is true for the father and son. The old Duke pardons Lussurioso when Ambitioso and Supervacuo pretend to plead for his life, since he realizes their ultimate intentions. But there is significantly no scene of reconciliation between them. And when the old Duke is murdered, Lussurioso is not the most unhappy person at Court. In his asides, he
reveals his joy at being the Duke and prepares to liquidate the rest of his family in a festive masque. There is no sympathy or natural feeling for anyone in the play. Even Vindice never speaks of affection, only of revenge.

Vindice's final confession reveals much about his character and about the play as a whole:

Vindice: May not we set as well as the Duke's son? Thou hast no conscience - are we not revenged? Is there one enemy left alive amongst those? 'Tis time to die when we are ourselves our foes.

(V. iii)

As I have mentioned, it has been hard for us to sympathize with Vindice for the previous two acts. He has acted in a manner similar to the other characters, without any thought or meaning behind his actions. His euphoric exits and entrances have given a sort of irony to the scenes and contrasted with the violent and horrible actions which have occurred within them. We are almost prepared to call him mad until this final scene. Here, for no apparent reason, he confesses his crimes and tells all. Hippolito tries to stop him when he realizes what Vindice will do, but to no avail, for Vindice is an innocent, even to the end. As he confesses, we begin finally to understand the driving power that was inside the man, this need to clean the society of evil and to create a justice for all. He knows he has done right, but cannot see that the way he did it was as corrupt as those he destroyed. His final lines come as an explanation of what
he has done, not as a defence:

Vindice: ..... We have enough
I'faith, we're well, our mother turned,
our sister true,
We die after a nest of dukes. — Adieu.

(V. iii)
NOTES


4. The Revenger's Tragedy - Some Possible Sources (Modern Language Review LX #1, January 1965) p.11, 12.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


*The Revenger's Tragedy - Some Possible Sources* (Modern Language Review LX #1, January 1965)


THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

BY

CYRIL TOURNEUR
This Section of the thesis has been broken down in the following way. Firstly, the script has been divided into scenes, with each scene being divided into individual units. Secondly, blocking, sound and light cues have been recorded on it, and thirdly, each scene has been analyzed in terms of the separate units.
THE PROCESSION

2 TORCH BEARERS
1. DUKE
2. LUSCINGO
3. SPURIO
4. DUCHESS

IN TIME WITH MUSIC THEY ENTER AND SLOWLY WALK AROUND THE SCENE. THE TORCH BEARERS STAND ON EITHER SIDE OF THE CENTRAL ARCH, AND EXIT WITH THE LAST OF THE MUSIC.
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

*DUKE
LUSSURIOSO, the Duke's Son.
SPURIO, his Bastard Son.
AMBITIOSO, the Duchess' eldest Son.
SUPERVACUO, the Duchess' second Son.
JUNIOR, the youngest Son of the Duchess.
VINDICE (Piato)  
HIPPOLITO (Carlo) Brothers, Sons of Gratiana.
ANTONIO) Nobles.
PIERO)
DONDOLI, Servant to Castiza.
   Nobles, Gentlemen, Judges, Officers, Servants.
DUCHESS
CASTIZA, Sister to Vindice and Hippolito.
GRATIANA, her Mother.

The Action takes place in Italy, in and around the
Duke's Palace.
ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

VINDICE (carrying a skull); the DUKE, DUCHESS, LUSURIOUS her Son, SPURIO the Bastard, with a train, pass over the Stage with Torch-light. VINX UL TO STAINS.

VINDICE: Duke, royal lecher! Go, grey-haired adultery,
And thou his son,
And thou his bastard, true-begotten evil:
And thou his Duchess, that will do with evil.
Four ex'cent characters — O, 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 parched and juiceless luxur, O God! One
That has scarce blood enough to live upon,
And he to riot it like a son and heir?
O the thought of that
Turns my abused heart-strings into fret.

[Addressing Skull.]
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 filled 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 be made a woman's son
Melt all his patrimony, in a kiss.

THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

And what his father fifty years told—
To have consumed, and yet his suit been cold:

But oh accursed palace!
Thee, when thou wert appareled in thy flesh,
The old Duke poisoned,
Because thy purer part would not consent
Unto his palsy-lust, for old men lust-full
Do show like young men angry, eager-violent,
Out-bid like their limited performances.

Wear an old man hot, and vicious!
'Age as in gold, in lust is covetous.'

Vengeance, thou Murder's quit-rent, and whereby
Thou show'st thyself tenant to Tragedy,
Oh keep thy day, hour, minute, I beseech;
For those thou hast determined: hum, who'er knew
Murder unpaid? Faith, give Revenge her due.
Sh's kept touch hitherto—be merry, merry
Advance thee, O thou terror to fat folks,
To have their costly three-piled flesh worn off
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, HIPPOLOTO.

HIPPOLOTO: Still sighing o'er death's vizard.
VINDICE: (With quick'ly) Brother, welcome,
What comfort bring'st thou? How go things at Court?
HIPPOLOTO: In silk and silver brother: never braver.

VINDICE: Thou play'st upon my meaning, prithee say
Hast that bald madam, Opportunity,
Yet thought upon's? Speak, are we happy yet?
Thy wrongs and mine are for one scabbard fit.

HIPPOLOTO: It may prove happiness.

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

40. Quit-rent: rent paid in lieu of service by free-holding tenant.
ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

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

VINDICE: Ay, the Duke’s Chamber,
But 'tis a marvel thou’rt not turned out yet!

HIPPOLITO: Faith, I have been shoved 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 enquired for me,

(Whose pleasure I attended; he began
By policy to open and unhusk me
About the time and common rumour:
But I had no 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 disgraced
In former times, or by new grooms displaced
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 pan­
der.

VINDICE: I reach you, for I know his heat is such,
Were there as many concubines as ladies
He would not be contained, he must fly out:
I wonder how ill-featured, vile-proportioned
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.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

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

VINDICE: And I'll prefer you brother.

VINDICE: Go to then,
The smallst advantage fatten'd wrong'd men,
It may point-out, occasion, if I meet her,
I'll hold her by the fore-top 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, turns up as thought.

HIPPOLITO: And sister.

VINDICE: 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 whispered there the Duchess' youngest son
Has played 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.

VINDICE: Sister, y'ave sentenced 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?

VINDICE: I intend speedy travel.

HIPPOLITO: That he does, Madam.

GRATIANA: Speedy indeed!

VINDICE: For since my worthy father's funeral
My life's unnatural to me, e'en compelled,

92. Put on: assume the guise of.
100. French mole: head tumour.
102. Coin: feign.
ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

As if I lived now when I should be dead.

G R A T I A N A: Indeed he was a worthy gentleman
Had his estate been fellow to his mind.


G R A T I A N A: Much! Too much.

V I N D I C E: And through disgrace oft smothered in his spirit
When it would mount; surely I think he died
Of discontent, the nobleman’s consumption.

G R A T I A N A: Most sure he did.

V I N D I C E: Did he? ’Lack – you know all,
You were his midnight secretary.

G R A T I A N A: No.

V I N D I C E [aside]: I’ faith then, father, thou wast wise
indeed
‘Wives are but made to go to bed and feed.’

H I P P O L I T O: I will.

V I N D I C E: I’ll quickly turn into another.

[Exeunt.]

[SCENE TWO]

E n t e r t h e o l d D u k e, L u s s u r i o s o h i s s o n, t h e D u c h e s s
S p u r i o] t h e B a s t a r d, t h e D u c h e s s’ t w o s o n s A m b i t t i o s o
and S u p e r v a c u o, t h e t h i r d h e r y o u n g e s t [J u n i o r]
brought out with officers for the Rape: and Judges.

D U K E: Duchess, it is your youngest son, we’re sorry
His violent act has e’en drawn blood of honour
And stained 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

[Dejct: bring down; show no favours to.]
THE REVENGER’S TRAGEDY

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.

FIRST JUDGE: Your Grace hath spoke like to your silver years
Full of confirmed gravity; for what is it to have
A flattering false inscription on a tomb,
And in men’s hearts reproach? The bowelled corps
May be seared in, but with free tongue I speak,
‘The faults of great men through their sear clothes 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 [kneeling]: 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!

LUSURIOSO:
Then ’twill not taste so bitter and unpleasant
Upon the judges’ palate, for offences
Gilt o’er with mercy show like fairest women,
Good only for their beauties, which washed off,
No sin is uglier.

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

SPURIO [aside]: He yields small comfort yet, hope he shall die,
And if a bastard’s wish might stand in force,
Would all the court were turned into a corse.

20. Fact: deed (i.e. the crime).
ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

DUCHESS: No pity yet? Must I rise fruitless then? — RISES

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 first hold of his unclean attempt;
A rape! Why, 'tis the very core of lust,
Double adultery. — RISES L. FORWARD

SECOND JUDGE: And which was worse
Committed on the lord Antonio's wife,
That general honest lady; confess my lord
What moved you to't?

JUNIOR: Why flesh and blood, my lord. — MOVES DE

LUSURIOUS: 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;
Though marriage only has made thee my brother
I love thee so far, play not with thy death.

JUNIOR: I thank you truth, 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, judgement 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 ordained to be my scaffold,
And yet methinks I might be easier ceast,
My fault being sport, let me but die in jest.

FIRST JUDGE: This be the sentence — WROOLS THE DEED

DUCHESS: O keep't upon your tongue, let it not slip! — RISES DOWN BEHIND

65. Ceast: stopped (i.e. prevented from indulging in lechery).
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

Death too soon steals out of a lawyer's lip.
Be not so cruel-wise!

70 FIRST JUDGE: Your Grace must pardon us.
Tis but the justice of the law.

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

SPURIO [aside]: Now, now he dies, rid 'em away.
DUCHESS [aside]: O what it is to have an old-cool Duke,
To be as slack in tongue as in performance.

FIRST JUDGE: Confirmed; this be the doom irrevocable.

DUCHESS: Oh! 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]:
What makes my dad speak now?

Duke: We will defer the judgement till next sitting;
In the meantime let him be kept close prisoner:
Guard, bear him hence. (GUARD MASSES TO JR.)

AMBITTOSO [to JUNIOR]: 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 [JR.]

SPURIO: Delayed, deferred! Nay then, if judgement have
Cold blood, flattery and bribes will kill it.

DUCHESS: About it then, my lords, with your-best powers.

More serious-business calls upon our-hours.

A ROY'S Exeunt DUCHESS remains. (STAY) ______________

DUCHESS: Was't ever known step-Duchess was so mild
ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

And calm as I? Some now would plot his death
With easy doctors, those loose-living men,
And make his withered Grace fall to his grave
And keep church better.
Some second wife would do this, and dispatch
Her double-loathed 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.]

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
Swelled up with jewels, and the timorous man
Is yet but coldly kind;
That jewel's mine that quivers in his ear
Mocking his master's chillness and vain fear.
H's spied me now.

SPURIO: Madam? Your Grace so private? Bows
My duty on your 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.
Kisses her.

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

123. Hatted dame: low-class woman. (Noble ladies wore no hats.)
THE REVENGER’S TRAGEDY

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 ’t were love, but ’tis 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: ’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-chewed suspicion, marry,
He was wondrous tall, he had his length — faith,
For peeping over half-shut holiday windows,
Men would desire him ’light; when he was afoot,
He made a goodly show under a penthouse,
And when he rid, his hat would check the signs
And clatter barbers’ basins.
DUCHESS: Nay, set you a horseback once,
You’ll never 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 known thee a good man from the first
Thou hadst been next thee in the dukedom’s ring
When his worn-sell-like Age’s easy slave
Had dropped out of the collet into thy grave.
What wrong can equal this? Canst thou be tame
And think upon’t?
SPURIO: No, mad and think upon’t. —

140. Penthouse: hanging eaves.
152. Collet: where stone is set in a ring.
ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

DUCHESS: Who would not be revenged of such a father
E'en in the worst way? I would thank that sin
That could most injure 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 o'the womb, the thief of Nature,
Begot against the seventh commandment,
Half-damned in the conception, by the justice
Of that unbribed everlasting law.

SPURIO: Oh I'd a hot-backed 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
wreapt in.
I'll be revenged for all; now hate, begin,
I'll call foul incest but a venial sin.

DUCHESS: Cold still? In vain then must a Duchess woo?

SPURIO: Madam, I blush to say what I will do.

DUCHESS: Thence flew sweet comfort; — earnest, and fare­­well.

[ Kisses him. ]

SPURIO: Oh one incestuous kiss pierceth open hell.

DUCHESS: 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 glutinous 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,

176. Woman's heraldry: cuckold's horns.
Uttering words sweet and thick; and when they rose
Were merrily disposed to fall again –
In such a whispering and withdrawing hour,
When base male bawds kept sentinel at stairhead,
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.

[SCENE THREE]

Enter Vindice and Hippolito, Vindice in disguise
to attend Lussurioso the Duke’s son.

Vindice: What brother, am I far enough from myself?

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

Vindice: It will confirm me bold: the child-o’-the court;
Let blushes dwell i’th’country. Impudence!
Thou goddess of the palace, mistress of mistresses,
To whom the costly perfumed people pray,
Strike thou my forehead into dauntless marble,
Mine eyes to steady-sapphires; turn my visage,

Loose my days: spend my time (in working his ruin).
ACT ONE, SCENE THREE

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 maidens wise, and are less ashamed.
Save Grace the bawd, I seldom here grace named!

HIPPOLITO: Nay brother, you teach out o' th' verge now

[Enter LUSURIOSO attended]—

'Sfoot, the Duke's son, settle your looks.

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

[Hippolito money._—

HIPPOLITO: Your plenteous honour—a most excellent fellow my

LUSSURIOSO: So, give us leave—

Welcome, be not far off,

We must be better acquainted. Push, be bold
With us—thy hand.

VINDICE: With all my heart, i'faith!
How dost, sweet musk-cat—when shall we lie togethers?

17. Verge: limit of royal court (virga = rod); with possible quibble
on 'beyond virginity'.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

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

VINDICE: Oh very well sir – I conster myself saucy.
LUSSURIOSO: What hast been, sir?
Of what profession?

VINDICE: A bone-setter.
LUSSURIOSO: A bone-setter?
VINDICE: A bawd my lord,
One that sets bones together.
LUSSURIOSO: Notable bluntness!

Thou hast been scrivener to much knavery then

VINDICE: Fool to abundance sir; I have been witness
To the surrenders of a thousand virgins,
And not so little;
I have seen patrimonies washed apieces,
Fruit-fields turned 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 o'en shaped for my purpose. [To VINDICE] Then,
I'm answer'd: 'tis the world strange lust!

VINDICE: O Dutch lust! Fulsome lust!
Drunken procreation, which begets so many drunkards;
Some fathers dread not – gone to bed in wine – to slide
from the mother
And cling the daughter-in-law;

55. Gravel: to dry ink with sand.
ACT ONE, SCENE THREE

Some uncles are adulterous with their nieces,
Brothers with brothers' wives, O hour of incest!
Any kin now next to the rim o'th'sister
Is man's meat in these days; and in the morning,
When they are up and dressed, and their mask on,
Who can perceive this? Save that eternal eye
That sees through flesh and all? Well, if any thing be
damned
It will be twelve o'clock at night; that twelve
Will never 'scape,
It is the Judas of the hours, wherein
Honest salvation is betrayed to sin.

LUSSURioso: In truth it is too, but let this tale glide,
It is our blood to err, tho' hell-gaped wide.
Ladies know Lucifer fell, yet still are proud.
Now sir; wert thou as secret as thou art subtle
And deeply fathomed 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.

VINDICE: My lord?
Secret? I ne'er had that disease o'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 over night,
Your doctor may find it in the urinal i'th'morning.
But my lord—
LUSSURioso: So, thou'rt confirmed in me,
And thus I enter thee.

[Vindice gives him gold.]

VINDICE: 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 levelled at a virgin, not far from court

87. Indian devil: gold from the Indies.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

To whom I have conveyed by messenger
Many waxed 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.

VINDICE: Possible?
'Tis a rare phoenix who e'er she be;
If your desires be such, she so repugnant
In troth my lord, I'd be revenged 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?

VINDICE: A very fine religion!
LUSSURIOSO: Therefore thus,
I'll trust thee in the business of my heart
Because I see thee well experienced
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.

VINDICE: You have gi'n't the tang 'faith, my lord.
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 -


60
ACT ONE, SCENE THREE

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

VINDICE [aside]: Oh, my sister, my sister!

LUSSURIOSO: Why dost walk aside?

VINDICE: 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.

VINDICE: No, that shall put you in, my lord.

LUSSURIOSO: Shall’t? Why, content. Dost know the daughter then?

VINDICE: O ex’lent well by sight.

LUSSURIOSO: That was her brother.

VINDICE: My lord, I think so.

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

VINDICE: Oh me good Lord!

LUSSURIOSO: We may laugh at that simple age within him;

VINDICE: Ha, ha, ha.

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

VINDICE: That’s I my lord.

LUSSURIOSO: That’s thou.
To entice and work his sister.

VINDICE: A pure novice!

LUSSURIOSO: ’Twas finely managed.

VINDICE: Gallantly carried;
A pretty-perfumed villain.

LUSSURIOSO: I’ve bethought me
If she prove chaste still and immovable,
Venture upon the mother, and with gifts

130. Put a non in: provide an opening.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

150 As I will furnish thee begin with her.

VINDICE: O 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.
VINDICE: Does't so my lord?

160 Let me alone then, to eclipse the fourth.
LUSSURIOSO: Why well said, come, I'll furnish thee; but
cest
Swear to be true in all.
VINDICE: True!
LUSSURIOSO: Nay but swear!
VINDICE: Swear? I hope your honour little doubts my
faith.
LUSSURIOSO: Yet for my humour's sake, 'cause I love
swearing.
VINDICE: 'Cause you love swearing, — 'slud I will.
LUSSURIOSO: Why enough,
Ere long look to be made of better stuff.
VINDICE: That will do well indeed my lord.

[Exit.

VINDICE: Oh —

170 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,

157. So in league with age: so much in tune with the times.
165. 'Shud: abbreviation of 'God's blood'.
ACT ONE, SCENE THREE

It would not prove the meanest policy
In this disguise to try the faith of both;
Another might have had the self-same office,
Some slave, that would have wrought effectually,
Slyly and perhaps o'er-wrought-emy; therefore I,
Being thought travelled, will apply myself
Unto the self-same 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. THOMAS A. "J." W. G.

[SCENE FOUR]

Enter the discontented Lord ANTONIO, whose wife the
Duchess' younger son ravished; he discovering the body of her
death to certain Lords: [PIERO] and HIPPOLITO.

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

PIERO: That virtuous lady!

ANTONIO: Precedent for wives!

HIPPOLITO: The blush of many women, whose chasteness
Would even call shame upon their cheeks, and make
Pale wanton sinners have good colours.

ANTONIO: Dead!

PIERO: O grief of many!

ANTONIO: I mark'd it not this before-
A prayer book, the pillow to her cheek;
This was her rich confection, and another...

THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

Radd in her right hand, with a leaf tucked up;
Pointing to these words:
Melius virtute morti quam per dedicis vivere.
True and effectual it is indeed.

HIPPOLETO: 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 -

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 torchlight made an artificial noon
About the court, some courtiers in the mask,
Putting on better faces than their own,
Being full of fraud and flattery: amongst whom
The Duchess' youngest son - that moth to honour -
Filled up a room; and with long lust to eat
Into my wearing, amongst all the ladies
Singly out that dear form, who ever lived
As cold in lust as she is now in death,
Which that step-duchess-monster knew too well -
And therefore in the height of all the revels,
When music was heard loudest, courtiers busiest,
And ladies great with laughter - O vicious minute!
Unfit but for relation to be spoken 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.

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

PIERO: My lord, what judgement follows the offender?

ANTONIO: Faith none, my lord, it cools and is deferred.
ACT ONE, SCENE FOUR

PIER: Delay the doom for rape?
AN: O you must note who 'tis should die,

The Duchess' son; she'll look to be a saver,

'Judgement in this age is near kin to favour.'

[Draws sword.]

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,
Judgement speak all in gold, and spare the blood
Of such a serpent, even before their seats
To let his soul out, which long since was found
Guilty in heaven.

ALL: We swear hand and will act it.
AN: Kind gentlemen, I thank you in mine ire.

HIPP: 'Twere pity

The ruins of so fair a monument
Should not be dipped in the defacer's blood.

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.

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

Exeunt.

54. Saver: a term derived from various games.
ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

Enter Castiza, the sister.

Castiza: How hardly shall that maiden be bested;
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 impoverished hell.

[Enter Dondolo.] How now, Dondolo?

Dondolo: Madona, 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, madona!

Castiza: Why, say so, madman, and cut off 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 servingman.

Castiza: Yours be your own sir; go direct him hither.

[Exit Dondolo.]

I hope some happy tidings from my brother
That lately travelled, whom my soul affects.
Here he comes,

Enter Vindice, her brother disguised.

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

VINIDICE: Lady, the best of wishes to your sex; Fair skins and new gowns.

CASTIZA: Oh they shall thank you, sir.

VINIDICE: Oh from a dear and worthy friend, Mighty!

CASTIZA: From whom?

VINIDICE: The Duke’s son!

CASTIZA: Receive that!

VINIDICE: 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 for ever, and this cheek Shall still henceforward take the wall of this. Oh I’m above my tongue! Most constant sister, In this thou hast right honourable shown; Many are called by their honour that have none, Thou art approved for ever in my thoughts. It is not in the power of words to taint thee, And yet for the salvation of my oath, 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. 

35. Virgin limits: see note to I. iii. 17.
46. Take the wall: have precedence over.
50. Approved: proved.

53.
THE REVENGER’S TRAGEDY


GRATIANA: Y’are welcome sir.

VINDICE: The next of Italy commends him to you, Our mighty expectation, the Duke’s son.

GRATIANA: I think myself much honoured, that he pleases To rank me in his thoughts.

VINDICE: 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 blest were they now that could please him E’en with any thing almost.

GRATIANA: Ay, save their honour.

VINDICE: 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.

VINDICE: 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 desired your daughter.

GRATIANA: Desired?

VINDICE: 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 you’re poor, And ‘lack the day, there are too many poor ladies already Why should you vex the member? ’Tis despised; Live wealthy, rightly understand the world And chide away that foolish country girl Keeps company with your daughter, Chastity.

58. The next: in line of succession.
ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

GRATIANA: Oh fie, fie, the riches of the world cannot hire
A mother to such a most unnatural task.

VINDICE: 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 fool[s].
Would I be poor, dejected, scorned of greatness,
Swept from the palace, and see other daughters
Spring with the dew o’th’Court, having mine own
So much desired and loved – 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: O heavens! This overcomes me!

GRATIANA [aside]: It is too strong for me, men know that
know us
We are so weak their words can overthrow us.
He touched me nearly, made my virtues ’bate,
When his tongue struck upon my poor estate.

VINDICE [aside]: I can scarce to proceed, my spirit turns edge-
Lest I fear she’s unmothered, yet I’ll venture,
‘That woman is all male, whom none can enter’ –
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


69
THE REVENGER’S TRAGEDY,

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.

VINDICE [aside]: The comfort on’t!

I keep the best for last; can these persuade you
[Showing her gold.]
To forget heaven and—

GRATIANA: Ay, these are they—

VINDICE: Oh!

GRATIANA: That enchant our sex;
These are the means that govern our affections—
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!

VINDICE [aside]: O suffering heaven, with thy invisible finger
Even at this instant turn the precious side
Of both mine eyeballs inward, not to see myself.

GRATIANA: Look you sir.

VINDICE: Holla.

GRATIANA: Let this thank your pains.

VINDICE: O you’re a kind madam.

GRATIANA: I’ll see how I can move.

VINDICE: Your words will sting.

GRATIANA: If she be still chaste, I’ll never call her mine.

VINDICE [aside]: Spoke truer than you meant it.

GRATIANA: Daughter Castiza.

[Enter CASTIZA.]

CASTIZA: Madam?

VINDICE: O she’s yonder.

Meet her. [Aside] Troops of celestial soldiers guard her heart,
You damn’s devils enough to take her part.

125. The mother: punning on sense of ‘hysteria’. Cf. line 239.
ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

CASTIZA: Madam, what makes yon evil-officed 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 wouldest 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 shouldst 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,
     While other[s] clip the sun they clasp the shades!
     Virginity is paradise, locked 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.
     Pray did you see my mother? Which way went you?
     Pray God I have not lost her.
VINDICE [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 changed, one shape into another
     It is a wise child now that knows her mother.
VINDICE: Most right, i'faith.
GRATIANA: I owe your cheek my hand
     For that presumption now, but I'll forget it.
     Come, you shall leave these childish 'haviours
     And understand your time. Fortunes flow to you,
     What, will you be a girl? (bends)

THE REVENGER’S TRAGEDY

If all feared 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.

VINDICE [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 heaven’s 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 blest 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: Oh if I were young, I should be ravish’d!
CASTIZA: Ay, to lose your honour.
VINDICE: ’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.
VINDICE: O think upon the pleasure of the palace,
Secur’d 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, music, sports,
Bare-headed vassals, that had ne’er the fortune
To keep on their own hats, but let horns wear ’em!

190. Petitionary people: people seeking favours.
ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

Nine coaches waiting – hurry, hurry, hurry.

CASTILIA: Ay, to the devil.

VINDICE: Ay, to the devil. – To the Duke, by my faith.

GRATIANA: Ay, to the Duke: daughter, you’d scorn to think

O’t’devil, an you were there once.

VINDICE: 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-lived 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 fore-parts? 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 flourished ever since;
Lands that were meat by the rod – that labour’s spared –
Tailors ride down and measure ’em by the yard.
Fair trees, those comely foretops of the field,
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 at?’

GRATIANA: Troth; he says true.
THE REVENGER’S TRAGEDY

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

240 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. [aside] O angels, clap your wings upon the skies
And give this virgin crystal pleadings!
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.

250 Exit.

VINCENT: Indeed I’ll tell him so.
O 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
And strike the sins that tread upon it? Oh,
Weren’t not for 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.

260 Exit. [aside] Alas, !

252. Unto: barbarous.
ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

[SCENE TWO]

Enter LUSSURIOUSO with HIPPOLITO, VINDICE's brother.同步舞台

LUSSURIOUSO: I much applaud.
Thy judgement. 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—
LUSSURIOUSO: And I much thank thee, that thou hast preferred
A fellow of discourse well mingled,
And whose brain time hath seasoned.
HIPPOLITO: True, my lord,
We shall find season once, I hope.—[Aside] O villain! To make such an unnatural slave of me,—but—
[Enter VINDICE disguised.]
LUSSURIOUSO: Mass, here he comes.
HIPPOLITO (aside): And now shall I have free leave to depart.
LUSSURIOUSO: Your absence—leave us.
HIPPOLITO: Are not my thoughts true?
I must remove; but brother, you may stay—
Hence, we are both made bawds—a new-found way.
Exit...
LUSSURIOUSO: Now we're an even number, a third man's dangerous,
Especially her brother; say, be free.
HIPPOLITO: Oh my lord!
LUSSURIOUSO: Ravish me in thine answer; art thou rare?
Hast thou beguiled her of salvation
And rubbed hell o'er with honey? Is she a woman?
VINDICE: In all but in desire.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

LUSSURIOSO: Then she's in nothing.

VINDICE: The words I brought
Might well have made indifferent honest naught.
A right good woman in these days is changed
Into white money with less labour far;
Many a maid has turned 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?

VINDICE [aside]. Now must I blister my soul, be foremost.
Oh, shame the woman that received me first.
I will be true; thou livest not to proclaim;
Spoke to a dying man; shame has no shame.

My lord—

LUSSURIOSO: Who's that?

VINDICE: Here's none but I, my lord;

LUSSURIOSO: What would thy haste utter?

VINDICE: Comfort.

LUSSURIOSO: Welcome.

VINDICE: The maid being dull, having no mind to travel
Into unknown lands, what did me I 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 damned before the daughter?

VINDICE: 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?


76
ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

VINDICE: 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 mother's 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.

VINDICE: When his pleasure conducts him this way.'

LUSSURIOSO: That shall be soon, 'faith.

VINDICE: 'I will sway mine own.'

LUSSURIOSO: She does the wiser, I commend her for't.

VINDICE: 'Women with women can work best alone.'

LUSSURIOSO: By this light and so they can! Give 'em
      Their due, men are not comparable to 'em.

VINDICE: No, that's true, for you shall have one woman
      Knit more in an hour than any man
      Can ravel again in seven and twenty year.

LUSSURIOSO: Now my desires are happy; I'll make 'em
      Free-men 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?

VINDICE: Office, my lord!
      Marry, if I might have my wish, I would
      Have one that was never begged yet.

LUSSURIOSO: Nay, then thou canst have none.

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

LUSSURIOSO: Prithee, good bluntness, tell me.

VINDICE: Why, I would desire but this, my lord;
      To have all the fees behind the arras, and all

71. Beg, leg!: kneel down to ask a favour.
72. Drab: whore.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

The farthingales that fall plump about twelve o'clock
At night upon the rushes.

LUSSURIO: Thou'rt a mad apprehensive knave;
Dost think to make any great purchase of that?
VINDICE: Oh 'tis an unknown thing my lord, I wonder
'Tas been missed so long!

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

Exit. 

VINDICE: My loved lord.
Oh, shall I kill him o'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 swelled 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 turned 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.
VINDICE: What, in the name of knavery?

HIPPOLITO: Knavery, 'faith;
This vicious old duke's worthily abused;
The pen of his bastard writes him cuckold!

84. Apprehensive: quick-witted.
105. Ports: gates.
78
ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

VINDICE: His bastard?

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

VINDICE: Oh sin foul and deep!

Great faults are winked at when the Duke's asleep.
(See, see, here comes the Spurio)

[Enter spurio with two servants.]

HIPPOLITO: Monstrous luxur!

VINDICE: Unbraced: two of his valiant-bawds with him.
O, there's a wicked whisper,—hell is in his ear.

SPURIO: Oh, but are you sure on't?

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 word, 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.]

VINDICE: Mark, there, there—step now, to the
Duchess;
This their second meeting writes the Duke cuckold
With new additions, his horns newly revived:
Night! Thou that look'st like funeral heralds' fees
Torn down betimes 'tis 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

116. Unbraced: without doublet; in his shirt.
134. Fees: 'phaze', hangings.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

E'en at sunset are now perhaps i'th'toll-book.

This woman in immodest-thin-apparel

Let's in her-friend-by-water; here-a-dame

Cunning nails leather hinges-to-a-door

To avoid proclamation.

Now.cuckolds are a-coining, space, space, space, space!

And careful sisters spin that thread i'th'night

That does maintain them and their bawds i'th'day.

HIPPOLITO: You flow well, brother!

VINDICE: [aside]:--Heart-and-hell!

HIPPOLITO:[aside]:--Damned-villain!

VINDICE:[aside]:--I ha.'no-way now to cross it, but to kill

him:

LUSSURIOSO: Come, only thou and I.

VINDICE: My lord, my lord.

LUSSURIOSO: Why dost thou start us?

VINDICE: I'd almost forgot -- the bastard!

LUSSURIOSO: What of him?

VINDICE: This night, this hour -- this minute, now --

LUSSURIOSO: What? What?

VINDICE: Shadows the duchess --

LUSSURIOSO: Horrible word!

VINDICE: And like strong poison eats

Into the duke your father's forehead.

139. Toll-book: list of horses on sale at a fair.
ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

LUSSURIOSO: Oh!
VINDICE: He makes horn royal.
LUSSURIOSO: Most ignoble slave!
VINDICE: This is the fruit of two beds.
LUSSURIOSO: I am mad.
VINDICE: That passage he trod warily.
LUSSURIOSO: He did?
VINDICE: And hushed his villains every step he took.
LUSSURIOSO: His villains? I'll confound them.
VINDICE: Take 'em finely, finely now.
LUSSURIOSO: The duchess' chamber-door shall not control me.

_Exeunt._

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

_EXIT._

[SCENE THREE]

[DUKE and DUCHESS discovered in bed._]

Enter again [LUSSURIOSO and VINDICE]. Followed by HIPPO.
LUSSURIOSO: Where is that villain?
VINDICE: Softly my lord, and you may take 'em twisted.
LUSSURIOSO: I care not how!
VINDICE: Oh, 'twill be glorious
To kill 'em doubled, when they're heaped; 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 for ever._

[Approaching bed._]

Villain! Strumpet!

VINDICE and HIPPO remain at back stairs.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

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.
O, thou wilt kill me both in heaven and here.

LUSSURIOSO: I am amazed to death!
DUKE: Nay, villain traitor,
Worse than the foulest epithet, now I'll grip thee—
E'en with the nerves of wrath, and throw thy head
Amongst the lawyers! Guard!

Enter nobles and Sons [with HIPPOLITO]. Fin. 2

FIRST NOBLE: How comes the quiet of your grace disturbed?

DUKE: This boy, that should be myself after me,
Would be myself before me, and in heat
Of that ambition, bloodily rushed in,
Intending to depose me in my bed.

SECOND NOBLE: Duty and natural loyalty forfend!

DUCHESS: He called his father traitor, and me strumpet,
A word that I abhor to 'file my lips with.

AMBITIOSO: That was not so well done, brother.

LUSSURIOSO: I am abused—
I know there's no excuse can do me good.

VINDI- [aside to HIPPOLITO]:—'Tis now good policy to be from sight;

His vicious purpose to our sister's honour
Is crossed—beyond our thought.

HIPPOLITO: You little dreamt his father slept here.

VINDI-: Oh—twas far beyond me,
But since it fell so, without fright—full—word[s].
Would—he—had—killed—him, 'twould—have—eased—our swords.

[VINDI- and HIPPOLITO:—free]

DUKE: Be comforted our duchess, he shall die.

25. 'File: defile.
ACT TWO, SCENE THREE

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

Enter SPURIO with his villains.

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

FIRST SERVANT: O good my lord!

SPURIO: Arrd-will-damn-5'ou-with-one-meal-4*y.

SECOND SERVANT: O I beseech you sir.

SPURIO: To let my sword

First servant: To meet thee.

SPURIO: Heart, he's yonder!

He, what news here? Is the day out of the socket
That it is noon at midnight? — the court up?

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.

AMBITIOSO [aside]: Good, if faith, then 'tis not much amiss.

LUSSURIOSO: 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: And I may live to thank you.

Exeunt [LUSSURIOSO and guards].

AMBITIOSO [aside]: No, thy death shall thank me better.

SPURIO [aside]: 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.
Ambitiono: 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.

Ambitiono: My gracious lord, take pity—

Duke: But my hand shall n'er do't.

Ambitiono: That, as you please, my lord.

Supervacuo: We must needs confess
Some father would have entered into hate
So deadly pointed, that before his eyes
He would have seen the execution sound
Without corrupted favour.

Ambitiono: But my lord,
Your Grace may live the wonder of all times
In pardoning that offence which never yet
Had face to beg a pardon.

Duke: Honey, how's this? (Aside)

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

Supervacuo: He's the next heir, yet this true reason gathers,
ACT TWO, SCENE THREE

None can possess that dispossess their fathers.
Be merciful.

DUKE: [aside]—Here's no stepmother's wit;
I'll try both upon their love and hate.

AMBITIOSO: Be merciful — altho' —

DUKE: You have prevailed.
My wrath like flaming wax hath spent itself;
I know 'twas but some peevish moon in him.
Go, let him be released.

SUPERVACUO [aside]: —'Shoo, 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: O 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 wished his burden not so sore,
We knew your Grace did but delay before.

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 purged.
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 released suddenly.

Enter NOBLES.

FIRST NOBLE: Good morning to your Grace.

96. Moon: lunatic notion.
109. Lawn: fine white linen.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

DUKE: Welcome, my lords.

[Exeunt kneels]

SECOND NOBLE: Our knees shall take away the office of
Our feet for ever,
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: 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.

Exeunt. UP STAIRS LEFT.

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 turned 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 UC. THROUGH CURTAIN.
ACT THREE

[SCENE ONE]

Enter AMBITIOSO and SUPERVACUO. Down stairs R.

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 deferred 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 named
'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]: —— -
An he were once pulled out, here is a pin
Should quickly prick your bladder.

AMBITIOSO: Blest occasion!
He being packed, 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 '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: Let me alone to grind him.

Exit.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

AMBITIOSO: Meet; farewell.
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.

[SCENE TWO]

Enter with the nobles, Lussurioso from prison.

Lussurioso: My lords, I am so much indebted to your
loves
For this, - O 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.
O Liberty, thou sweet and heavenly dame!
But hell, for prison is too mild a name.
Exit.

[SCENE THREE]

Enter Ambitioso and Supervacuo among 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 employed
In such an unkind office, fitter far
For enemies than brothers.

Supervacuo: But you know
The Duke's command must be obeyed.

First Officer: It must and shall, my lord; this morning
then,
- So suddenly?
Ambitioso: Ay, alas, poor good soul,
He must breakfast betimes, the executioner
Stands ready to put forth his cowardly valour.
ACT THREE, SCENE THREE

SECOND-OFFICER: Already?
SUPERVACUO: Already i'faith, - O sir, destruction hies,
And that is least impudent, soonest dies.

FIRST-OFFICER: Troth, you say true, my lord; we take
our leave.
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?

SECOND-OFFICER: It shall be done, my lord.
AMBITIOSO: Why, we do thank you; if we live to be,
You shall have a better office.

SUPERVACUO: Commend us to the scaffold in our tears.

AMBITIOSO: We'll weep and do your commendations.

SUPERVACUO: Things fall out so fit.
AMBITIOSO: So happily! Come brother, ere next clock
His head will be made serve a bigger block.

Exeunt.

[SCENE FOUR]

Enter in prison JUNIOR. PACK IN ARCH 3
JUNIOR: Keeper.
KEEPER: My lord?
JUNIOR: No news lately from our brothers?
Are they unmindful of us?

89
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

KEEPER: My lord, a messenger came newly in
And brought this from 'em.
[Hand him a letter] JUNIOR GRABS LETTER

JUNIOR: Nothing but paper comforts?
I looked for my delivery before this,
Had they been worth their oaths. — Prithee, be from us.

[Exit KEEPER.] Now, what say you, forsooth; speak out, I pray:
[Reads letter]: 'Brother, be of good cheer.'

'Eu'd, it begins like a whore, with good cheer.
'Thou shalt not be long a prisoner.

'Not five and thirty year, like a bankrupt, — I think so.
'We have thought upon a device to get thee out by a trick.'

By a trick? Pox o' your trick, an 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 KEEPER.] DOWN STAIRS

How now, what news?
KEEPER: Bad news my lord; I am discharged of you.

JUNIOR: Slave, call'st thou that bad news? I thank you,

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

[Exit KEEPER.] JUNIOR: Ha, officers? What, why?

FIRST OFFICER: You must pardon my lord,

OFFICER: My 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?
ACT THREE, SCENE FOUR

SECOND OFFICER: My lord, those words were better changed 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
   Deferred 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 hope's 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: '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 showed like brothers,
   Brim-full 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;
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

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.

FIRST OFFICER: That may hold too sir for you know a trick is commonly foul cards, which was meant By us four officers.

JUNIOR: Worse and worse dealing.

FIRST OFFICER: The hour beckons us, The headsman 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 oonns 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, O 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.

SCENE FIVE

VINDICE: O sweet, delectable, rare, happy, ravishing!

HIPPOLEITI: Why what's the matter brother?

VINDICE: O 'tis able
ACT THREE, SCENE FIVE

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 vowed once
To give me share to every tragic thought.

VINDICE: 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
Are cut out of one piece — for he that prates his secrets,
His heart stands o' th' outside — hires me by price:
To greet him with a lady
In some fit place veiled from the eyes o' th' Court,
Some darkened 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 unsunlit 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 missed me, brother.

VINDICE: True, but the violence of my joy forgot it.

HIPPOLITO: Ay, but where's that lady now?

VINDICE: 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. 

4. Silver ceiling: the decorated stage canopy or 'heavens'.
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.

'Tis part of my allegiance to stand base
To the Duke's conscience — and here she comes.
Enter VINDICE with the skull of his love dressed up in Tires.

VINDICE: Madam, his grace will not be absent long.
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.

[He reveals the skull.]

HIPPOLITO: Why brother, brother!

VINDICE: Art thou beguiled 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,
All's 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?

42. S.D. Tires: head-dress.
ACT THREE, SCENE FIVE

VINDICE: The very same —
And now methinks I could e'en chide myself
For doting on her beauty, tho' her death
Shall be revenged after no common action.
Does the silk-worm 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 you fellow falsify high ways
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.

VINDICE: Does every proud and self-affected dame
Camphor her face for this, and grieve her Maker
In sinful baths of milk, — when — many an infant starves
For her superfluous outside, — all for this?
Who now bids twenty pound a night, — prepares
Music, perfumes, and sweetmeats? All are hushed,
Thou may'st 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 fashioned this only for show
And useless property; no, it shall bear a part
100. Property: theatrical 'prop'.

95
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

E'en in its own revenge. This very skull,
Whose mistress the Duke poisoned with this drug,
The mortal curse of the earth, shall be revenged
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.

VINDICE: 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.

[Noises within.]

VINDICE: 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
With the bony lady.

[He withdraws.]

HIPPOLITO: That I will.

VINDICE: So, so; — now nine years' vengeance crowd into
a minute.

[Enter DUKE and GENTLEMEN through Arch 1]

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

VINDICE [aside]: —— Oh happiness!

DUKE: With some few honourable gentlemen, you may
say;
You may name those that are away from court.
ACT THREE, SCENE FIVE

GENTLEMAN: Your will and pleasure shall be done, my
lord.

[Exeunt GENTLEMEN] [Through Arch]

VINDICE [aside]: Privately in-ward!

He strives to make sure work on it.

DUKE: Plato, well done. Hast brought her? What lady is she?

VINDICE: 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.

VINDICE [aside]: —Have at all!

DUKE: In gravest looks the greatest faults seem less;

Give me that sin that's robed in holiness.

VINDICE [aside]: —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 encountered; I came from court,

I must be bold with you.

[Kisses skull] — What, this? Oh!

VINDICE: Royal villain! White devil!

DUKE: Oh! (Drops skull)

VINDICE: Brother, place the torch here, that his affrighted

eye may start into those hollows. Duke, dost know

You dreadful wizard? View it well; 'tis the skull

Of Gloriana, whom thou poisonedst last.

DUKE: Oh, 'tis poisoned me!

VINDICE: Didst not know that till now?

138. Have at all: venture all.
146. White devil: hypocrite.
149. Wizard: visage.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

DUKE: What are you two? 

VINDICE: Villains — all three! The very ragged bone Has been sufficiently revenged.

DUKE: Oh Hippolito, call treason!

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

Stamping on him.

DUKE: Then I'm betrayed.

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

DUKE: My teeth are eaten out.

VINDICE: Hadst any left?

HIPPOLITO: I think but few.

VINDICE: Then those that did eat are eaten.

DUKE: O my tongue!

VINDICE: Your tongue? 'Twill teach you to kiss closer, Not like a gobbling 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 —

VINDICE: 'Tis I, 'tis Vindice, '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!

VINDICE: He had his tongue, yet grief made him die speechless.

Pub, '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!

VINDICE: Thy bastard, thy bastard rides a-hunting in thy brow.
DUKE: Millions of deaths!

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

DUKE: Is there a hell besides this, villains?

VINDICE: Villain?

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

HIPPOLITO: Once ere they die, the quitted.

VINDICE: Hark, the music;

Their banquet is prepared, they're coming.

DUKE: Oh, kill me not with that sight!

VINDICE: Thou shalt not lose that sight for all thy dukedom.

DUKE: Traitors, murderers!

VINDICE: What! Is not thy tongue eaten out yet?

Then we'll invent a silence. Stifle the torch.

DUKE: Treason, murder!

VINDICE: Nay, 'faith, we'll have you hushed 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 bleed;
When the bad bleeds, then is the tragedy good.

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

Enter the Bastard [SPURIO] towards the DUCHESS.

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.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

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 hasped within his bed, I would add murder to adultery And with my sword give up his years to death.

DUCHESS: Why, now thou'ret sociable; let's in and feast Loud'st music sound: pleasure is Banquet's guest.

DUKE: I cannot brook -- [Dies.] 'tis the old Duke, thy doubtful father.

VINDICE: The brook is turned to blood.

HIPPOLITO: Thanks to loud music.

VINDICE: 'Twas our friend indeed.

' Twas 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.

[SCENE SIX]

Enter the DUCHESS' two sons, AMBITIOSO and SUPERVACUO. Down SEERS LEFT

AMBITIOSO: Was not his 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?

ACT THREE, SCENE SIX

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 lived.
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 you're much too bold; you should a little
Remember us, brother, next to be honest Duke.
SUPERVACUO [aside].-Ay, it shall be as easy for you to be duke
As to be honest, and that's never-faith. (PAUSE)
AMBITIOSO: Well, cold he is by this time, and because
We're both ambitious, be it our amity
And let the glory be shared 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't were yours.
[Enter officer, bearing a head] FROM ARMS
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
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

To that desertless office to present you
With the yet bleeding head.

SUPERVACUO [aside]: Ha, ha, excellent. (to AMB)
AMBITIOSO [aside]: 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.
SUPERVACUO [aside]: 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 distinguished.

SUPERVACUO: How died he, pray?
OFFICER: O, 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 showed 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 cursed you both.
SUPERVACUO: He cursed us? 'Las, good soul.
AMBITIOSO: It was not in our powers, but the Duke's
pleasure.

[Aside]: Finely, dissemble o'both sides, sweet face!
O happy opportunity!

UNIT: Enter LUSURIOUSO. (To AMB)
LUSURIOUSO: Now my lords.

Both: O! Why do you shun me, brothers?
You may come nearer now; (Pause)

---

Turns to OFFICER

Turns completely to OFFICER

Stands next to AMB.

They turn

Takes step to them
ACT THREE, SCENE SIX

The savour of the prison has forsook me,
I thank such kind lords as yourselves, I'm free.

AMBITIOSO: Alive!
SUPERVACUO: In health!
AMBITIOSO: Released!

We were both e'en amazed with joy to see it.
LUSSURIOSO: I am much to thank you.
SUPERVACUO: 'Faith, we spared no tongue unto my lord
the Duke.

AMBITIOSO: I know your delivery, brother,
Had not been half so sudden but for us.

SUPERVACUO: O how we pleaded!
LUSSURIOSO: Most deserving brothers,
In my best studies I will think of it.

Exit LUSSURIOSO.

AMBITIOSO: O death and vengeance!
SUPERVACUO: Hell and torments!
AMBITIOSO: Slave, cam'st thou to delude us?

OFFICER: Delude you my lords?
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: His whom you left command for, your own
brother's.

AMBITIOSO: Whose head's that then?
OFFICER: His whom you left command for, your own
brother's.

AMBITIOSO: Our brother's? O 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.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGÉDY

OFFICER: O my good lord!

[Exit officer.]

SUPERVACUO: The devil overtake thee.

AMBITIONO: O fatal!

SUPERVACUO: O prodigious to our bloods!

AMBITIONO: Did we dissemble?

SUPERVACUO: Did we make our tears women for thee?

AMBITIONO: Laugh and rejoice for thee?

SUPERVACUO: Bring warrant for thy death?

AMBITIONO: Mock off thy head?

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

AMBITIONO: A murrain meet 'em!

There's none of these wiles that ever come to good:

I see now there's nothing sure in mortality but mortality.

Well, no more words, 't shall be revenged '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.

Exit through arch 2.

Sup. pulls out head as shade goes dark.
ACT FOUR
SCENE ONE

Enter Lussurioso with Hippolito. Down stairs R.

Lussurioso: Hippolito.

Hippolito: My lord —

Lussurioso: Has your good lordship aught to command me in?

Hippolito: How's this? — come, and leave us? (Pause)

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:

You 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

'Had 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.

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 razed my father's bosom.

For which I was within a stroke of death.

Hippolito: Alack! I'm sorry. [Aside]—Shoot—just—upon the stroke—Enter—Vindice.

Vindice: My honoured lord—

Lussurioso: Away, prithee forsake us! Hereafter we'll not know thee.

Vindice: Not know me, my lord! Your lordship cannot choose.

Lussurioso: Begone I say; thou art a false knave.

Vindice: Why, the easier to be known, my lord.

Lussurioso: Push, I shall prove too bitter with a word,

Make thee a perpetual prisoner.

Vindice: [Aside]—Num, for there's a doon—would make a woman—dumb.—

Missing the bastard—next him, the wind's come about;

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

Exit Vindice. [Aside]

Lussurioso: H'm, as greatly moved me.

Hippolito: Much to blame I think.

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, ordained him to be poor,—

Keeps at home, full of want and discontent.

Lussurioso: [Aside]—There's hope in him, for discontent and want:—

Jars in: enters discordantly,

Ironage: fetters.
ACT FOUR, SCENE ONE

Hippolito, wish him repair to us;
If there be aught 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.

[Lussurioso:] Whom he casts off, even 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.

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 never lives to see his beard turn white.

I will speed him: I'll employ thee, 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.

First Noble enters.

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;

72. Slight: unreliable.
76. Black condition: melancholy disposition.
82. From: away from.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

Not can we hear on't.

[Enter more nobles.]

lusserios: Here come those should tell.

Saw you my lord and father?

Second noble: Not since two hours before noon, my lord,

And then he privately rid forth.

lusserios: Oh, he's rid forth.

First noble: 'Twas wondrous privately.

Second noble: There's none-i'th' court had any knowledge on's.

lusserios: 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.

Third noble: Tis on't, my lord.

Exeunt.

[Scene Two]

Enter Vindice and Hippolito, Vindice out of his disguise.

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

Vindice: 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.

Vindice: 'Twill be the quaintest 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:

He and his secretary the devil knows best.

Vindice: Well, I must suit my tongue to his desires,

What colour so e'er they be, hoping at last

To pile up all my wishes on his breast.

HIPPOLITO: Faith-brother, he himself shows the way.

Vindice: Now the duke is dead, the realm is clad in clay.
ACT FOUR, SCENE TWO

His death being not yet known, under his name
The people still are governed. Well, thou his son
Art not long-lived; 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 diedst with grief.

HIPPO: 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 tripped, we fall for ever.
It is not the least policy to be doubtful;
You must change tongue — familiar was your first.

VIND: 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.

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

VIND: I'll turn myself, and then —
HIPPO: 'Sfoot here he comes; hast thought upon't?
VIND: Salute him, fear not me. —

[Enter LUSSURIO.] Down weis & unsp. —

LUSSURIO: Your lordship —
HIPPO: What's he yonder?
LUSSURIO: 'Tis Vindice, my discontented brother.
Whom, 'cording to your will I've brought to court.
LUSSURIO: Is that thy brother? Beshrew me, a good presence;
I wonder h' 'as been from the court so long.
Come nearer.
HIPPO: Brother, Lord Lussurioso, the Duke[']s son.
LUSSURIO: Be more near to us, welcome, nearer yet.

Snatches off his hat and makes legs to him.

20. Kind: natural. This usage is frequent throughout the play.
43. God ... den: God give you good day.
LUSSURIO: 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 never be stood on't —
heaven!
Tell me what has made thee so melancholy.

VINDICE: Why, going to law.
LUSSURIO: Why, will that make a man melancholy?
VINDICE: Yes, to look long upon ink and black buckram.
I went to law in Anno Quadragesimo Secundo, and I
waded out of it in Anno Sexagesimo Tertio.
LUSSURIO: What, three and twenty years in law?
VINDICE: I have known those that have been five and
fifty, and all about pullin and pigs.
LUSSURIO: May it be possible such men should breathe
To vex the terms so much?

VINDICE: '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 suits canvassed — that
their common talk is nothing but Barbary Latin: they
cannot so much as pray but in law, that their sins may be
removed with a writ of Error; and their souls fetched up
to heaven with a sasarara.

LUSSURIO: 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.

VINDICE: 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

57. Pullin: poultry.
59. Terms: legal sessions.
66. Sasarara: writ of certiorari.
you readily to all the boxes; and when he is past all memory — as the gossips guess — then thinks he of forfeitures and obligations; nay, when to all men’s hearings he whirls and rattles in the throat, he’s busy threatening 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 published bountiful enough.
Let’s taste of your conceit.

VINDICE: In picture, my lord?

LUSSURIOSO: Ay, in picture.

VINDICE: Marry, this it is! — ‘A usuring Father to be boiling in hell, and his Son and heir with a Whore dancing over him.’

HTTPOLITO [aside]: Has-pared-him-to-the-quick.

LUSSURIOSO: The conceit’s pretty i’faith,
But take’t upon my life ’twill ne’er be liked.

VINDICE: No? Why, I’m sure the whore will be liked well enough.

HTTPOLITO [aside]: Ay, if she were out o’th’picture he’d like her then himself.

VINDICE: 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: An 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.

VINDICE: O true, I cry you heartly mercy. I know the reason, for some of them had rather be damned indeed than damned in colours.

80. Conceit: conception.
THE REVenger'S TRAGEDY

LUSSURIO: [aside]: A parlous melancholy! H'as wit enough
To murder any man, and I'll give him means. -
I think thou art ill moneyed.

VINDICE: Money, ho, ho! 'T'as been my want so long, 'tis now my scoff.
I've e'en forgot what colour silver's of.
LUSSURIO: [aside]: It hits as I could wish.

VINDICE: I get good clothes
Of those that dread my humour, and for table-room
I feed on those that cannot be rid of me.
LUSSURIO: Somewhat to set thee up withal.

[Vides him gold.]
VINDICE: O mine eyes!
LUSSURIO: How now, man?

VINDICE: Almost struck blind;
This bright unusual shine to me seems proud,
I dare not look till the sun be in a cloud.
LUSSURIO: [aside]: I think I shall affect his melancholy.

How are they now?

VINDICE: The better for your asking.
LUSSURIO: 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 disgraced you much and injured us.

HIPPO: Disgraced us, my lord?

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

VINDICE: I'm covetous.
To know the villain.
LUSSURIO: You know him, that slave pander

Piato, whom we threatened last
With irons in perpetual imprisonment.

VINDICE: [aside]: All this is I.

119. Affect: like.
ACT FOUR, SCENE TWO

HIPPOLITO: Is't he my lord?

LUSSURIO: I'll tell you you first preferred him to me.

VINDICE: Did you, brother?

HIPPOLITO: I did indeed.

LUSSURIO: And the ingratitude, 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: O villain!

VINDICE: He shall surely die that did it.

LUSSURIO: I, far from thinking any virgin harm,
Especially knowing her to be as chaste
As that part which scarce suffers to be touched -
Th'eye - would not endure him.

VINDICE: Would you not, my lord?

LUSSURIO: But with some fine frowns kept him out.

VINDICE: [aside] Out, slave!

LUSSURIO: 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 'tis but desperate folly to attempt it,
In mere spleen, by the way, waylays your mother,
Whose honour being coward - as it seems -
Yielded by little force.

VINDICE: Coward indeed!

LUSSURIO: He, proud of their advantage - as he thought -
Brought me these news for happy; but I - heaven forgive me fort!

VINDICE: What did your Honour?

LUSSURIO: In rage pushed him from me
Trampled beneath his throat, spurned him, and bruised:
Indeed, I was too cruel, to say troth.

HIPPOLITO: Most nobly managed!
THE REVENER'S TRAGEDY

VINDICE [aside]: Has not heaven an ear? Is all the lightning wasted?

LUSSURIOSO: If I now were so impatient in a modest cause, what should you be?

VINDICE: 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.

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

HIPPOLITO [aside]: An impossible task, I'll swear, to bring him hither that's already here.

VINDICE: Thy name? I have forgot it.

LUSSURIOSO: 'Tis a good name, that.

VINDICE: Ay, a Revenger.

LUSSURIOSO: It does betoken courage; thou shouldst be valiant and kill thine enemies.

VINDICE: That's my hope, my lord.

LUSSURIOSO: This slave is one.

VINDICE: I'll doom him.

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

VINDICE: Indeed I thank you.

LUSSURIOSO: Now Hippolito, where's the slave pander?

HIPPOLITO: Your good lordship

181. Observe: serve.
ACT FOUR, SCENE TWO

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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.

VINDICE: [Aside]: Twas well conveyed, upon a sudden wit.

LUSSURIOSO: What, are you both
Firmly resolved? I’ll see him dead myself.

VINDICE: Or else let not us live.

LUSSURIOSO: You may direct your brother to take note
of him.

HIQUELITO: I shall.

LUSSURIOSO: Rise but in this and you shall never fall.

VINDICE: 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.

VINDICE: O thou Almighty patience! ’tis my wonder
That such a fellow, impudent and wicked,
Should not be cloven as he stood,

[It is cloven with a secret wind-burst open]

Is there no thunder left, or is’t kept up
In stock for heavier vengeance? [Thunder.] There it goes!

HIQUELITO: But I have found it,
’Twill hold, ’tis sure; thanks, thanks to any spirit
That mingled it amongst my inventions.

VINDICE: What is ’t?

HIQUELITO: ’Tis sound and good, thou shalt partake it: I’m hired to kill myself.

VINDICE: Prithee, mark it:
And the old Duke being dead, but not conveyed,
For he’s already missed too, and you know,
Murder will peep out of the closest husk.

HIQUELITO: Most true.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

VINDICE: What say you then to this device: -
If we dressed up the body of the Duke -
HIPPOLITO: In that disguise of yours -
VINDICE: Y'are quick, y'ave reached it.
HIPPOLITO: I like it wondrously.
VINDICE: And being in drink, as you have published him,
To lean him on his elbow, as if sleep had caught him,
Which claims most interest in such sluggish men.
HIPPOLITO: Good, yet - but here's a doubt:
We, thought by the Duke's son to kill that pander,
Shall, when he is known, be thought to kill the Duke.
VINDICE: Neither, O 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 disguised
To avoid swift pursuit.

HIPPOLITO: Firmer and firmer.
VINDICE: Nay doubt not, 'tis in grain, I warrant it
Hold colour.
HIPPOLITO: Let's about it.
VINDICE: But by the way too, now I think on't, brother,
Let's conjure that base devil out of our mother.

[SCENE THREE]

Enter AMB. DOOCO ARM GRAND
LEFT. HE CROSSES IN FRONT OF CENTRAL ARCH, HEARS LAUGHING AND HIDES
BEHIND PILLAR ON LEVEL. DUCHESS AND SPURIO EXETER DOWN STAIRS LEFT AND CROSS IN FRONT OF CENTRAL ARCH. SPURIO SEES AMB. HIDING

[Enter the DUCHESS arm in arm with the Bastard; he smoothly lasciviously to her; after them enter SPURIO running with a rapier; his brother AMB. arm and runs out]

SPURIO: Madam, unlock yourself; should it be seen
Your arm would be suspected.
DUCHESS: Who is't that dares suspect or this or these?
[Kissing him.]
May not we deal our favours where we please?
ACT FOUR, SCENE THREE

SPURIO: I'm confident you may.

Exeunt.

AMBITIOSO: 'Sfoot brother, hold.

SUPERVACUO: Would let the bastard shame us?

AMBITIOSO: Hold, hold, brother! There's fitter time than now.

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, - O death,

Must she needs choose such an unequal sinner,

To make all worse?

SUPERVACUO: A bastard, the Duke's bastard! Shame heaped on shame!

AMBITIOSO: O 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.

Exeunt.

SCENE FOUR

Enter VINDICE and HIPPOLITO bringing out their Mother, one by one shoulder and the other by the other, with daggers in their hands.

VINDICE: O thou for whom no name is bad enough!

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

VINDICE: Wicked, unnatural parent!

HIPPOLITO: Fiend of women!

GRATIANA: Oh, are sons turned monsters? Help!

VINDICE: In vain.

117
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

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

VINDICE: That breast
Is turned to quartered poison.

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

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

GRATIANA: A bawd? O name far loathsome than hell!

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

GRATIANA: I hate it.

VINDICE: Ah, is't possible? Thou only — you powers on
high,
That women should dissemble when they die.

GRATIANA: Dissemble?

VINDICE: 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?

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

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

HIPPOLITO: 'Twould make one half despair.

VINDICE: I was the man.

Defy me now, let's see! Do't modestly.

GRATIANA: O hell unto my soul! I was the man.

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

8. Quartered: quartered.
ACT FOUR, SCENE FOUR

GRATIANA: O no, no tongue but yours could have bewitched me so.

VINDICE: O 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 my self I'll prove more true.

You that should honour me, I kneel to you.

[V kneels, weeping.]

VINDICE: A mother to give aim to her own daughter!

HIPPOLITO: True, brother; how far beyond nature 'tis, Tho' many mothers do't!

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

HIPPOLITO: 'Tis done.

VINDICE: 'f 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.

GRATIANA: O 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.

VINDICE: 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.

VINDICE: 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 clinged unto your forehead. All mothers that had any graceful hue.

65. Graceful hue: touch of (divine) grace.
THE REVENGER’S TRAGEDY

Would have worn masks to hide their face at you.
It would have grown to this – at your foul name,
Green-coloured maids would have turned red with shame.
HIPPOLITO: And then, our sister full of hire and baseness!

VINDICE: There had been boiling lead again.
Duke’s son’s great concubine!
A drab of state, a cloth o’ silver slut,
To have her train borne up, and her soul trail i’th’dirt.
HIPPOLITO: Great, too miserably great! Rich to be eternally wretched.

VINDICE: O 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 the Duke’s son
In private. Why, she first begins with one
Who afterward[s] to thousand proves a whore:
‘Break ice in one place, it will crack in more.’

GRATIANA: Most certainly applied.
HIPPOLITO: Oh brother, you forget our business.

VINDICE: And well remembered; joy’s a subtle elf;
I think man’s happiest when he forgets himself.
Farewell, once dried, now holy-watered 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.

VINDICE: You make me proud on’t.
HIPPOLITO: Commend us in all virtue to our sister.
VINDICE: Ay, for the love of heaven, to that true maid.

GRATIANA: With my best words.

VINDICE: Why, that was motherly said.

Exeunt.

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.
And here she comes.

[Enter CASTIZA.]
ACT FOUR, SCENE FOUR

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: To do as you have wished me,
To prostitute my breast to the Duke's son
And put myself to common usury.

GRATIANA: I hope you will not so.
CASTIZA: 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. Whose
What would you now? Are you not pleased 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 charged 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,
Sons set in storm, and daughters lose their lights.
GRATIANA: Good child, dear maid, if there be any spark
Of heavenly intellectual fire within thee,
O let my breath revive it to a flame!
Put not all out with woman's wilful follies.
I am recovered of that foul disease
That haunts too many mothers; kind, forgive me.
Make me not sick in health. If then
My words prevailed 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

Kind: kin.

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: '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 say'st.

Castiza: No? Deny advancement, treasure, the Duke's son?

Gratiana: O 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'rt unchaste.

Castiza: O mother, let me twine about your neck
And kiss you till my soul melt on your lips.

Gratiana: O 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: O happy child! Faith and thy birth hath saved me.
'Mongst thousand daughters, happiest of all others,
Be thou a glass for maids, and I for mothers.

Exeunt.
[ACT FIVE]

[SCENE ONE]

Enter Vindice and Hippolito, [with the Duke's corpse.] Down stairs left.

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

Hippolito: I warrant you my life for yours.

Vindice: That's a good lay, for I must kill myself. Brother, that's 1: [Pointing to corpse] that sits for me: do you mark it. And I must stand ready here to make away myself yonder. I must sit to be killed, and stand to kill myself. I could vary it not so little as thrice over again; 'tis some eight returns, like Michaelmas Term.

Hippolito: That's enow, o' conscience.

Vindice: But sirrah, does the Duke's son come single? 10

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 supper time and hum for his coming out.

Vindice: 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 hugger-mugger, 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? 20

Vindice: 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.


19. Catastrophe: conclusion and climax (of a play).
THE REVENGER’S TRAGEDY

VINDICE: Content, I’m for any weather. Heart, step close; here he comes.

Enter LUSSURIOSO.

HIPPOLITO: My honoured lord.

LUSSURIOSO: Ome! You both present?

VINDICE: E’en newly my lord, just as your lordship entered 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

HIPPOLITO [Aside]: Death for those few.

LUSSURIOSO: Stay, yonder’s the slave.

VINDICE: Mass, there’s the slave indeed, my lord.

LUSSURIOSO: Ay, that’s the villain, the damned villain;

softly.

Tread easy.

VINDICE: Push, I warrant you, my lord

We’ll stifle in our breaths.

LUSSURIOSO: That will do well.

Base rogue, thou sleepest thy last. [Aside] Tis-policy

To have him killed in’s-sleep, for if he waked

He would betray all to them. 

VINDICE: But my lord——

LUSSURIOSO: Ha, — what say’st? 

VINDICE: Shall we kill him now he’s drunk?

LUSSURIOSO: Ay, best of all.

VINDICE: Why, then he will ne’er live to be sober.

LUSSURIOSO: No matter, let him reel to hell.

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

LUSSURIOSO: Thou art a mad beast.

VINDICE: And leave none to warm your lordship’s gols withal; for he that dies drunk, falls into hell-fire like a bucket o’water, qush, qush.

52. Gols: hands.
ACT FIVE, SCENE ONE

LUSSURISO: Come, be ready; make your swords, think of your wrongs.
This slave has injured you.

VINCICE: Troth, so he has, and he has paid well for't.

LUSSURISO: Meet with him now.

VINCICE: You'll bear us out, my lord?

LUSSURISO: Puh, am I a lord for nothing, think you?

Quickly now.

VINCICE (stabbing Duke's corpse): So, so, so!

LUSSURISO: Nimbly done! Ha! Oh villains, murderers!

"Tis the old Duke, my father.

LUSSURISO: What — stiff and cold already?
O pardon me to call you from your names —
'Tis none of your deed. That villain Plato,
Whom you thought now to kill, has murdered him
And left him thus disguised.

HIPPOLITO: And not unlikely.

VINCICE: O rascal, was he not ashamed
To put the Duke into a greasy doublet?

LUSSURISO: He has been cold and stiff — who knows how long?

VINCICE (aside): Marry, that do.

LUSSURISO: No words, I pray, of any thing intended.

VINCICE: Oh my lord.

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

LUSSURISO: 'Faith, thou sayest 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.

VINCICE: That will be the best way my lord, to clear Us all; let's cast about to be clear.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

LUSSURIOSO: Ho, Nencio, Sordido, and the rest!

FIRST [SERVANT]: My lord?
SECOND [SERVANT]: My lord?
LUSSURIOSO: Be witnesses of a strange spectacle.
Choosing for private conference that sad room,
We found the Duke my father gilded in blood.
FIRST [SERVANT]: My lord the Duke! Run, he thee

Nencio—

Start the court by signifying so much.

[Exit Nencio.]

VINDICE [aside]: Thus much—by wit—a deep—Revel—
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]: Hark, he calls thee—slave again.

VINDICE [aside]: As—lost—he may.

LUSSURIOSO: Oh sight! Look hither, see, his lips are
gnawn
With poison.

VINDICE: How?—His lips? By th'Mass, they be.
O villain! O rogue! O slave! O rascal!

HIPPOLITO [aside]: O—good deceit, he quits—him—with—like

terms.

[Enter AMBITIOSO and SUPERVACUO, with Courtiers.]

LUSSURIOSO: Behold, behold, my lords!
The Duke my father's murdered by a vassal
That owes this habit and here left disguised.

[Enter DUCHESS and SPURIO.]

DUCHESS: My lord and husband!

86. Room: place. 102. Quit: pays back.
ACT FIVE, SCENE ONE

[SECOND NOBLE]: I have seen these clothes often attending on him.

VINDICE [aside]: That nobleman has been in the country, for he does not die.

SUPRAVACUIO [aside]: Learn of our mother, let's dissemble.

I am glad he's vanished; so I hope are you.

AMBITIOSO [aside]: Ay, you may take my word for't.

SPURIO [aside]: Old dad dead?

LY-one-of-his-cast-sins, will send the fates

Most hearty commendations by his own son;

I'll tug in the new stream till strength be done.

LUSSURIOSEO: Where be those two that did affirm to us—

My lord the duke was privately rid forth?

FIRST NOBLE: O pardon us my lords, he gave that

charge

Upon our lives, if he were missed at court

To answer so; he rode not anywhere

We left him private with that fellow here.

VINDICE: Confirmed.

LUSSURIOSEO: O 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 NOBLE: My lord!

LUSSURIOSEO: Urge me no more.

In this the excuse may be called half the murder.

VINDICE: You've sentenced well.

Away, see it be done.

[Exit FIRST NOBLE under guard.]

VINDICE [aside]: Could you not stick? See what confession doth—

Who would not lie when men are hanged for truth?

HIPPOLITO [aside]: Brother, how happy is our vengeance!

VINDICE [aside]: Why, it hits past the apprehension of indifferent wits.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

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

VINDICE [aside]: Post-horse! Ha, ha!

NOBLE: My lord, we're something bound to, know our
duty:

LUSSURIOSO: Meet me? I'm not at leisure my good lord,
I've many griefs to dispatch out o' th'way.

[Aside] Welcome, sweet titles. - Talk to me, my lords,
Of sepulchres and mighty emperors' bones;
That's thought for me.

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

NOBLE: My lord, it is your shine must comfort us.

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

NOBLE: You're now my lord's Grace.
LUSSURIOSO: My lord's Grace! I perceive you'll have it so.

NOBLE: 'Tis but your own.

LUSSURIOSO: Then heavens give me grace to be so.

VINDICE [aside]: He prays well for himself.

NOBLE [to DUCHESS]: Madam, all sorrows
Must run their circles into joys; no doubt
But time will make the murderer bring forth himself.

VINDICE [aside]: He were an ass then, i' faith.

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,
Prepare for revels.

VINDICE [aside]: Revels.

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

146. Foreign markets: abandoned titles.
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

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 vexed with sin;
Wind up your souls to their full height again!

PIERO: How?

FIRST [LORD]: Which way?
[SECOND LORD]: Any way; our wrongs are such

We cannot justly be revenged too much.

VINDICE: You shall have all enough: revels are toward,
And those few nobles that have long suppressed you
Are busied to the furnishing of a mask
And do affect to make a pleasant tail on't.
The masking suits are fashioning; now comes in
That which must glad us all – we too take pattern
Of all those suits, the colour, trimming, fashion,
E'en to an undistinguished hair almost:
Then, entering 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 tother maskers come –
VINDICE: We're gone, all done and past.

PIERO: But how for the Duke's guard?

VINDICE: Let that alone;
By one and one their strengths shall be drunk down.
HIPPOLIOTO: There are five hundred gentlemen in the action
That will apply themselves, and not stand idle.

PIERO: Oh let us hug our bosoms!

VINDICE: Come my lords,
Prepare for deeds, let other times have words.
Exeunt.

30. Hug our bosoms: be determined and keep our own counsel.
ACT FIVE, SCENE ONE

Lussurioso: Come then my lords, my favours to you all.

[Duke turns and with aloof to Supervacuo; exits Cenise.]

Exeunt [Lussurioso] Nobles and Duchess. Cenise

Hippolito [aside]: Reveals! Vindice: Reveals!

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

Exeunt Brothers.

Spurio: Well, have at 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.]

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 outlive
The new duke by much; this hand shall dispossess him,
Then we're mighty.

A mask is treason's licence, that build upon;
'Tis murder's best face when a vizard's on.

Exit supervacuo. Qn/s e

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. M/exit

The cross to body. Exit All 4, dragging body

Enter vindice and hippolito with piero and other lords.

Vindice: My lords, be all of music! Strike old griefs into other countries

184. Vizard: mask.

129
ACT FIVE, SCENE THREE

[SCENE THREE]

In a dumb show, the possessing of the young Duke, with all his Nobles; then sounding music. A furnished table is brought forth; then enters the Duke and his Nobles to the banquet. A blazing star appears.

[First] Noble: Many harmonious hours and choicest pleasures Fill up the royal numbers of your years.

Lussurioso: My lords, we're pleased to thank you, tho' we know 'Tis but your duty, now to wish it so.

[Second] Noble: That shine makes us all happy.

[Third] Noble: His grace frowns.

[Second] Noble: Yet we must say he smiles.

First Noble: I think we must.

Lussurioso [aside]: That foul, incontinent duchess we have banished; 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 mask is not far off.

Lussurioso: We are for pleasure. Beshrew thee! What art thou mad'st-me-start? Thou hast committed treason. — A blazing star!

First Noble: A blazing star! O where, my lord?

Lussurioso: Spy-out.

Second Noble: See, see, my lords, a wondrous dreadful one!

Lussurioso: I am not pleased at that ill-knotted fire, That bushing-flaring star: — am not I Duke?

THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

20

It should not quake me now; had it appeared
Before it, I might then have justly feared.
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.

FIRST NOBLE: May it please your Grace,

It shows great anger.

LUSSURIOSO: That does not please our grace.
SECOND NOBLE: Yes, here's the comfort, my lord; many
times,
When it seems most near, it threatens farthest off.
LUSSURIOSO: Faith, and I think so too.

FIRST NOBLE: Beside, my lord,

You're gracefully established 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:
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.

THIRD NOBLE: Take your places, lords,
We're ready now for sports, let 'em set on.

THIRD NOBLE: I hear 'em coming, my lord.

Enter the Mask of Revengers, the two Brothers [VINDICE
and HIPPOLOTO] and some 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.

VINDICE: Mark, mark, mark!

Dost know thy cue, thou big-voiced cries?
Dukes' groans are thunder's-watch-words.

ACT FIVE, SCENE THREE

HIPPOLITO: So, my lords, you have enough.
VINDICE: Come, let's away—no lingering.
HIPPOLITO: Follow, go!

Exeunt. [VINDICE remains.]

VINDICE: No power is angry when the lustful die:
When thunder claps, heaven likes the tragedy.
Exit VINDICE. A L L I

LUSSURIOSO: Oh! Oh!
Enter the other Mask of intended murderers, Stepsons—
[AMBITIOSO and SUPERVACUO]; Bastard; and a-fourth.
—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.

SPURIO: Whose groan was that?
LUSSURIOSO: Treason! A guard!
AMBITIOSO: How now? All murdered!
SUPERVACUO: Murdered!

SPURIO [Lord]: And those his nobles?
AMBITIOSO [aside]: Here's a labour-saved;
I thought to have sped him. 'Sblood! How came this?
SUPERVACUO: Then I proclaim myself! Now I am Duke.
AMBITIOSO: Thou duke? Brother, thou liest!
[He slays SUPERVACUO.]

SPURIO: Slave, so dost thou!
[He slays AMBITIOSO.]

SPURIO [Lord]: Base villain, hast thou slain my lord and
master?
[He slays SPURIO.]

VINDICE: Pistols! Treason! Murder! Help, guard my lord
the Duke!
[Enter ANTONIO and the Guard.]

HIPPOLITO: Lay hold upon this traitor! A R C H
[They seize FOURTH LORD.] AND DRAW HIM OFF.


[They enter through Arch.]
THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

LUSSURIOSO: Oh!
VINDICE: Alas, the Duke is murdered!
HIPPOLITO: And the nobles.

VINDICE: Surgeons, surgeons! [Aside] Heart, does he breathe so long?
ANTONIO: A piteous tragedy! Able to wake
   An old man, 's eyes bloodshot.
LUSSURIOSO: Oh!
VINDICE: Look to my lord the Duke. [Aside] A vengeance

throttle him. —
   Confess, thou murderous and unhallowed man,
   Didst thou kill all these?
FOURTH [LORD]: None but the bastard-I.

VINDICE: How came the Duke slain then?

FOURTH [LORD]: We found him so:

LUSSURIOSO: O villain!
VINDICE: Hark!
LUSSURIOSO: Those in the mask did murder us.
VINDICE: Law! You now, sir.
   O marble impudence! Will you confess now?
FOURTH [LORD]: 'Sblood! Tis all false.
ANTONIO: Away with that foul monster
   Dipped in a prince's blood.

FOURTH [LORD]: Heart, tis a lie!
ANTONIO: Let him have bitter execution.

[Exit FOURTH LORD under guard.]
VINDICE: [Aside] New marrow! No, I cannot be expressed.

How fares my lord the Duke?
LUSSURIOSO: Farewell to all:
   He that climbs highest has the greatest fall.
   My tongue is out of office.
VINDICE: Air gentlemen, air!

[Whispering to LUSSURIOSO] Now thou'lt not prate on't —
   'twas Vindice murdered thee.
LUSSURIOSO: Oh!

79. Expressed: in the sense of squeezed out.
ACT FIVE, SCENE THREE

VINIDICE: Murdered thy father.

LUSUSSURISO: Oh!

VINIDICE: And I am he—tell nobody.

[LUSUSSURISO 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.

VINIDICE: My lord was unlikely.

HIPPOLITO: Now the hope

Of Italy lies in your reverend years.

VINIDICE: 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.

VINIDICE: The rape of your good lady has been 'quited

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 murdered.

VINIDICE: Oh my lord.

ANTONIO: It was the strangeliest carried; I not heard of

the like.

HIPPOLITO: 'Twas all done for the best, my lord.

VINIDICE: All for your Grace's good. We may be bold to

speak it now.

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

'Twas we two murdered him.

ANTONIO: You two?

VINIDICE: None else i'faith, my lord. Nay, 'twas well

managed.

ANTONIO: Lay hands upon those villains!

VINIDICE: How! On us?

ANTONIO: Beat 'em to speedy execution.

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

92. Unlikely: unpromising.
THE REV ENGER'S TRAGEDY

ANTONIO: My good? Away with 'em! — Such an old man as he!
You that would murder him, would murder me.
VINDICE: Is't come about?)
HIPPOLITO: 'Sfoot brother, you begun.
VINDICE: May not we set as well as the Duke's son?
Thou hast no conscience — are we not revenged?
Is there one enemy left alive amongst those?
'Tis time to die when we are ourselves our foes.
When murd'rs shut deeds close, this curse does seal
'em:

This murder might have slept in tongueless brass
But for ourselves, and the world died an ass.
Now I remember too, here was Plato
Brought forth a knavish sentence once: —
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 for ever —
This work was ours, which else might have been slipped,
If we list, we could have nobles' clipped
And gone for less than beggars, but we hate
To blood so cowardly. We have enough
If'faith, we're well, our mother turned, our sister true,
We die after a nest of dukes. — Adieu.

Exeunt [VINDICE and HIPPOLITO under guard]

ANTONIO: How subtly was that murder closed. Bear up
Those tragic bodies. 'Tis a heavy season;
Pray heaven their blood may wash away all treason.

[Exeunt omnes.]
UNIT ANALYSIS
Act One (Scene I)

As the opening scene, and the most important, it sets up the mood and atmosphere of the play. During the course of this scene, we are given the first notions of the plot and the cause and effects ruling the action. The main character is seen giving a long soliloquy, going through various changes of mood, indicating partially the kind of character we are dealing with. Vindice is seen alone on stage with the skull of Gloriana, and our first impression is one of a melancholic youth. This is far from so, and an immediate contrast is set up between the way Vindice looks and what he says.

The second purpose of the scene is to introduce the vices. During their procession, a mediaeval morality situation is set up as Vindice comments bitterly on their character and introduces them for the benefit of the audience. By the end of his soliloquy, we know certain facts and are given the basic plot outline. Vindice will revenge the Duke for the death of his betrothed, Gloriana. This Revenge motif is one that runs throughout the play.

From this opening sequence, we are also informed of another major theme, that of justice. Vindice's role in the play is one of self-appointed judge. He feels that he must restore order to the world of the Court and to rid it of evil and corruption. Thus, we can see from the start
that there are two opposite poles of justice established in the play, one represented by the Duke, and the other by Vindice.

Hippolito and later Gratiana and Castiza are introduced into the scene, giving us a picture of the two worlds revealed in the play, the evil and painted world of the Court, and the supposedly innocent world of Vindice and his family. Vindice also reveals his attitude towards women in the brief scene with his mother, and prepares us for later scenes.

The shape of the first scene is highly significant to the rest of the play. There is a sense of Tourneur's guiding purpose in the whole articulation of the scene, creating a rhythm which pervades the play as a whole. The scene is built on contrast, each section or unit having a different pace from the previous one with the over-riding sensation of secrecy and fear as the main factors. The main action of the scene centres around Vindice's dialogue with Hippolito, during which the plot is established.

The play begins in black. A blue spot comes on Vindice centre stage, holding the skull. The procession music begins softly in the background and as it gets louder Vindice quickly fades into the background where he cannot be seen by the entering vices. They enter through the centre arch, cross down stage and exit along the corridor. There is little light on stage, save for the torches, and the
feeling should be one of a satanic procession through the underworld of shadows. The stylized make-up and the lighting help to create this mood. As the scene progresses, more lights come on and the atmosphere is lightened until the final unit with Gratiana, which is quite mocking.

Unit I:

The purpose of this unit is twofold, to introduce the figures of the Court, and to introduce Vindice. Because of the dual purpose, we are jolted into an awareness of what is happening immediately. Vindice quickly moves away from the path of the vices so that he will not be seen, and in his introduction of them, his hatred is evident. The unit presents us with the background information necessary to understand why Vindice desires his revenge, and it is necessary that the audience feel he is justified in his attitude. Vindice's emotional involvement with the idea of revenge creates the dramatic tension in the scene. Yet at the same time this is contrasted with the fact that he has been brooding about this for nine years, and consequently he is also somewhat objective about the fact. This is seen when he utters the relaxed "hum" midway through his speech, and eases the tension completely. The important fact that emerges from this episode is that he no longer desires revenge in a passionate way to avenge his love, rather he wishes to restore justice to the Court.
Unit 2:
The purpose of this unit is to introduce Hippolito and to set up the plot. Hippolito enters on the last lines of Vindice's speech while he is slowly exiting. Hippolito's first line is more a statement than a question, and it causes Vindice to spin about quickly to find out who overheard his thoughts. Finding out it is his brother he relaxes again and the scene continues. Their interchange is a fast one, creating a totally different mood than the previous one. Their conversing is quick and witty.

The action of the scene revolves around the fact that after nine years of waiting, Vindice is now ready to act. The attitude of Hippolito is somewhat ambiguous at this point, although it is obvious that he is willing to help his brother completely and shares his feelings towards the Court.

Unit 3:
The purpose of this unit is to introduce Gratiana and Castiza. As they enter, the scene takes on a different feeling, both brothers put on masks and pretend to be delighted to see their mother. The remarks Vindice makes about women's virtue sets up the scene for his later attempt to make his mother into a bawd and his sister into a whore. In the few speeches in this unit, we are given a glimpse of the gossiping Gratiana and the pious Castiza, but Vindice has little time for either, and in a few humorous lines
attempts to rush them off stage and get down to his work. The unit provides a short interruption in the plot and heightens the tension that was established in the previous unit.
Act One (Scene 2):

This scene provides a marked contrast to the previous one. In regal splendour and ceremonial pomp, the Court figures enter to hear the judgment on the Duchess's youngest son, who has committed a rape. Appropriately enough, the Duke is judge and jury. The scene is primarily a self-sufficient demonstration of the evil in the Court, and lack of true justice. The character of the Duke is further revealed in the trial scene by his attitude to it and in the way the rest of the characters flatter and humour him.

The Scene opens with loud imperious music calling the Court to session. As the characters enter, singly and in pairs, they relax slightly while waiting for the Duke. As he enters, last, of course, they tense and wait. He controls the scene completely, both visually and dramatically. His robes are most impressive and he maintains a central position for the majority of the scene. Although he says little, the Duke's power is felt throughout the scene. In the space of a few minutes, all the main characters in the play have been introduced, and we know something about them. The scene conveys a sense of urgency, everyone wanting the trial to be over.

The Duchess does the most pleading, and Spurio the least - and the scene also establishes their relationship.
The scene is built up to an emotional climax which the Duke undercuts by delaying the trial. Then, with the Duchess still not reconciled to the outcome, Tourneur ends the scene with her planning to cuckold the Duke with the help of Spurio. The arguments and pleas for incestuous love make a strong contrast to the court scene ritual. The ritual is supple and rich in variation.

The Court scene is played using the entire stage including the central level where the Duke sits. The scene between Spurio and the Duchess is played down stage.

Unit I:

This unit serves to present the Court in its formal state. The dialogue between the Judge and the Duke is dignified but deceptive. The implications of what is said betray Tourneur's concern to reveal how the pervasive corruption destroyed the very foundations of justice, leaving nothing but the empty vocabulary of justice and morality. The ironic reversal of values in these opening speeches is the key to the whole situation in the scene and should be played up. The sententious flattery of the Judge points up this attitude of the Court. There is also a certain suspense built up in this unit, as it appears as though the Duke will sentence Junior to death.

Unit 2:

The purpose of this scene is to reveal the differing attitudes of the rest of the Court towards Junior.
and his impending doom. The Duchess's first words reveal her instincts to save her son. It is obvious from her first words is that her vision of herself is that of a young temptress and she tries using her sex to have the Duke save her son.

Lussurioso's attempt to save Junior is a weak one, revealing his dislike of the Duchess and her sons. Ambitioso and Supervacuo say little, Ambitioso having a few lines for both of them. Spurio speaks in a characteristic aside, revealing his hatred for his father in making him a bastard.

Unit 3:

This unit comprises the actual trial scene. The Judge, in an appropriate tone of disgust and distaste reads Junior's offence. Junior, who has until now been standing around on display, comes forth and in a tone of contempt says he does not give a damn, for he would do it all again if he could.

Tourneur has structured this unit masterfully, heightening the suspense and leading to the climax, or rather anti-climax. The lines between the Duchess and Judge become more intense, faster and louder in volume until the Duke halts the proceedings. The conflict of objectives in the unit create an interesting juxtaposition of values. The frenzy of the scene, the short rejoicing and promise of freedom on the brothers' part, and the swift exit of the Court
is contrasted with the empty stage and the Duchess left alone full of hatred and revenge.

Unit 4:

The purpose of this unit is to establish the Duchess as another revenge figure. Her long soliloquy gives an indication of her feelings towards the Duke. Coldly, she plans to cuckold him, knowing that this would be a more effective way of hurting him and would give her more satisfaction than merely murdering him.

Her desire for satisfaction in her revenge is a theme that re-occurs throughout the play. It is characteristic of all the revengers in the play to desire more than just the murder of their victims, they also wish to impose some tortuous act that would make the victim suffer even more.

Unit 5:

With the entrance of Spurio the previous speech is made clearer. That is, the Duchess loves, or lusts after Spurio, and means to have him, and incidentally to use him. His cautious entrance, however, and his anxious attempts to exit, prove that he is not as eager as she for the mating. She proves stronger than he, and exits triumphantly.

Unit 6:

The purpose of this final unit is to conclude the scene with a further promise of yet another revenge. In
his soliloquy, Spurio reveals his own angry frustrations and his hatred of the Court. We have seen characters with their masks on and off and the scene which Spurio so graphically describes in this speech can now only too easily be visualized.
Act One (Scene 3):

This scene takes us back to the end of the first scene, where Vindice and Hippolito first come up with the plan to disguise Vindice. From the beginning of this scene Vindice is already dressed as "Piato" with moustaché and a different hairstyle and costume. The first part of the scene is seen as an appraisal on both Lussurioso's and Vindice's part, as the former tries to find out how reliable, experienced and trustworthy "Piato" is, and the latter tries to see how far he can play the scene.

The second part of the scene deals with Lussurioso's desire for the virgin and how "Piato" should bring her to the Court.

The third part of the scene deals with Vindice's reaction to hearing that it is his sister that he must seduce. This last part is the more difficult one to play, since the actor must play both Vindice's surprise and Piato's wit in covering up the surprise. His final outburst however is the released tension of the scene, and consequently another view of Vindice's complex character.

Vindice's second speech was cut because it added unnecessary information and time to the action. The same was true of his last speech. It is important that the last impression the audience has of the scene is that of Vindice willing to try the virtue of his sister and mother.
Unit I:

This unit is to introduce Vindice as "Piato" before Lussurioso sees him, and to see what type of character he is playing. It is interesting to note that Vindice has complete faith in his "role", whereas Hippolito is slightly less sure.

Unit 2:

The purpose of this unit is to establish the relationship between Lussurioso and "Piato". This is done in a battle of wits between the two, with Vindice mainly controlling the situation. The interest of the scene lies in the stories which "Piato" relates to Lussurioso, increasing the latter's desires by describing the various sexual perversions he has come into contact with.

The second feature of the unit is Hippolito's relationship to Lussurioso. He is obviously taken for granted by Lussurioso and not thought important enough to worry about. This is ironic, since it is Hippolito who arranges most of the action of the play in one way or the other.

Unit 3:

The purpose of this unit is to have Lussurioso reveal his desires to "Piato" without letting him know the object of his desire. As he goes on and on about the virgin, the suspense is built up.
Unit 4:

This unit is the climax of the scene. Vindice is totally taken aback at the news that he is to bring his chaste sister to the lusty Lussurioso, and has a hard time covering up his surprise. He recovers to the extent that he can return Lussurioso's jokes with bitter one line invectives. The scene is effective since the audience is aware of Vindice's emotional stress, and yet Lussurioso is not.

Unit 5:

The purpose of this unit is to take the scene further in the same direction. Not being content with merely corrupting the daughter, Lussurioso tells "Piato" to try the mother and have her convince the daughter, since mothers are more easily convinced. At this, Vindice can hardly contain himself and answers as himself. Lussurioso does not notice and makes him swear loyalty. By this act, it almost seems that Vindice is totally committed to playing the "revenger".

Unit 6:

This final unit gives us a further insight into Vindice's character. His outburst is real enough, but it does not last long. It is seen that he has come to doubt his mother's and sister's virtue, and must prove their goodness.
Act One, Scene 4:

This scene was cut for two reasons. Firstly, it is a weak scene, the lines being irrelevant and repetitious, adding little to the main action of the play. Secondly, since it is mentioned earlier that Lord Antonio's wife was raped, this scene is a step backwards in the action, rather than a step forward. However, since it is important to introduce Antonio before the end of the play, a short section of the scene was kept, in which he mentions his hatred of the Court for their lack of justice. In this manner, he re-iterates a main theme and also provides a reason for his revenge on the Court.
Act Two, Scene I:

In this first scene, the action of the play really begins. Having set up all the situations and themes, and having introduced all the characters, Tourneur begins the action in earnest. From this scene until the end, there is very little letting up of the tension that will be developed in this scene.

The scene is built up in the following manner. Firstly, we see Castiza alone on stage, and during her soliloquy certain characteristics are revealed. Secondly, "Piato" enters and tries to persuade her to go to Lussurioso. Thirdly, he tries to convince the mother to go to Court, and to send her daughter to Court, and he succeeds. Fourthly, the mother tries to persuade the daughter and fails, and finally promises "Piato" that she will have her daughter go to Court if it is the last thing she does. As is usual by now, Vindice is once more left on stage alone to give release to his anger, which he has held imprisoned throughout the scene. Thus we can see how the tension mounts and how Vindice gets more and more involved with what he is doing.

Unit I:

The purpose of this unit is to present Castiza as the cold, chaste virgin that she is. She is also bitter about her situation, and philosophizes on the fact that only the rich can afford to be unchaste. As is seen later,
she never wavers from this position, and remains unmoving for the rest of the play.

Unit 2:

With the announcement of "Piato's" presence and his entrance, it is seen that Castiza has little sense of humour. She also does not recognize her brother, and therefore he is free to continue with his play.

Unit 3:

It becomes obvious from the start that Castiza will have none of "Piato's" fancy words or jewels, and in her cold, calculated slap all her virginal frustrations are channelled. She knows what he will say, since others have come before him, and waits for him to say it. Vindice is of course happy that she slapped him and has kept her virtue. Castiza symbolizes Gloriana who was also propositioned by one of the Court, and also kept her chastity. Yet, he still finds it necessary to test his mother's virtue.

Unit 4:

As Gratiana enters, her whole gracious manner indicates that she is pleased by the attention the Court has bestowed on her house. The unit begins slowly as they play a cat and mouse game. But it picks up immediately once "Piato" mentions money. Within a very few lines after this, she is calling her daughter into the room to reason with her. It is an ugly unit, insofar as a son is trying,
and succeeds, in convincing his mother to become a bawd.

Unit 5:

This unit is the central one of the scene. The three characters on stage, mother, daughter and son, are presented in an unnatural situation. The action consists of Gratiana attempting to convince her daughter that the life at Court is worth giving anything up for, and not succeeding. It is interesting to note that "Piato" who has carried the scene up to this point, now stays mostly in the background and lets the mother do her own filthy business.

At the end of the unit, Castiza re-iterates a main theme of the play, that of transformation. She says she does not recognize her mother, whereas in fact it is also her brother she doesn't recognize.

Unit 6:

The main action of this unit is Gratiana's promise to "Piato" that she will convince her daughter to go to Lussurioso, and thereby reveals herself to be the worst kind of mother we can imagine.

Unit 7:

The purpose of this last unit is for Vindice to be himself again and release his anger. Even though he feels strongly about the situation, he still maintains an objective viewpoint, and exits on a couplet on the nature of women.
Act Two, Scene 2:

This scene begins in a slow relaxed way with Lussurioso waiting for "Piato" and ends in a frenzy with Lussurioso ready to go and kill his stepmother and Spurio. The scene was re-arranged in order to maintain the quickening pace, and not waste time with explanations with which the audience was already familiar. The scene also revolves indirectly around Hippolito who informs various characters of things that are happening and thus triggers the action. The scene works as an espionage sequence, with three things happening at once, the atmosphere getting more and more intense and the scene ending just before a climax. As the scene takes place at night, it began in a relatively dim light, which went progressively darker until the final unit in which Lussurioso and Vindice skulk around the Duke's bedchamber in the shadows.

Unit I:

Lussurioso is anxiously waiting for "Piato's" news and is waiting with Hippolito until his entrance. As soon as he enters, Hippolito must leave. "Piato" tantalizes Lussurioso with tidbits of what transpired earlier. By the end of the unit, which was broken up with a short scene between Spurio and the servant, Lussurioso is ready to go to Castiza that very night. As Lussurioso exits, Vindice follows ready to kill him, but refrains since he would not be effectively acting out his revenge by this act.
Unit 2:

The purpose of this short unit is to introduce another complication into the plot at this time, and also provide a ready solution to an earlier complication. Spurio is told of Lussurioso's plans to have Castiza that night, and he decides to kill Lussurioso in the very act. Hippolito, who has seen Spurio and the servant confer, thinks that he is going to have a rendezvous with the Duchess and tells Vindice so later on, in the next unit.

Unit 3:

When Lussurioso comes back and is ready to go to Castiza, Vindice is lost for words and does not know what to do. Hippolito, who is hidden from Lussurioso, whispers to Vindice about the bastard. Vindice tells Lussurioso, who gets incensed, forgets about his lust, and decides to kill Spurio instead. The scene ends with the three of them sneaking around the stage to the bedchamber.
Act Two, Scene 3:

This scene begins where the previous one left off and ends on a much quieter note. The main action consists of the mistaken identity and with Lussurioso being led off for attempting to murder his father. The Duke is revealed as a weak, cowardly character, whose strength is centred around his robes of office and his titular position. Once the threat is removed, he slowly regains his stature and resumes his power.

The end of this scene leads into the next act, where Ambitioso and Supervacuo plot and plot and inevitably fail.

Unit 1:

The unit begins with excitement and expectation. Lussurioso plans to kill Spurio, realizes it is his father and is totally perplexed. The Duke's appearance is comic relief, and as he enters the audience realizes also what a mistake Lussurioso has made, and they can laugh.

Unit 2:

As the rest of the Court enters, Lussurioso tries to explain his innocence, but cannot. Spurio enters, angry that he did not catch Lussurioso, sees that he is in trouble anyway, and exits happily. The unit is short, no one waits around to hear the consequences and Lussurioso is despatched to the dungeon.
Unit 3:

The purpose of this unit is to reveal the true nature of Ambitioso and Supervacuo. They not only try to have Lussurioso hanged as soon as possible, without making it appear as though this is what they want, they also try to outdo each other for the Duke's favour. The scene is humorous, for it is obvious that he is aware of their deceit and plays them off against each other.

Unit 4:

The purpose of this unit is to give the Duke a final word on the situation, and to have his son released without anyone else being aware of it. His final speech is important, for it shows him to be totally aware of his own corruption, and at the same time ready for more seductions. He knows that he is governed by his own lust, and in this knowledge lies his own death a few scenes later.
Act Three, Scene I:

The purpose of this scene is to establish the action for the rest of this Act, which except for Scene 4, concerns Ambitioso and Supervacuo directly. These two are further revealed as conspiring but unsuccessful revengers. The scene also establishes the rivalry between them. The scene begins with them deciding the quickest and best method of ridding themselves of Lussurioso and very shortly they have a plan. In the final moments of the scene, their already growing distrust of each other is made clearer.

Act Three, Scene Two:

The release of Lussurioso creates an ironic situation which comes to a head in a later scene.

Act Three, Scene 3:

This scene is an extension of the first scene. Without realizing that Lussurioso has been set free, the brothers continue to plot his execution. Ambitioso bribes the officer in an attempt to get the deed done faster, and to appear in a higher position than he is. With the officer's exit, the brothers literally jump for joy and begin to plan how to get their brother out of prison.

Act Three, Scene 4:

The purpose of this scene is to introduce Junior in the prison, and to show how the brothers' plotting causes him to lose his life. The scene opens with Junior pacing back
and forth in his cell, his chains clanging and a blue light on the area. The confinement in the cell was indicated by playing the scene totally inside the second arch, with the only means of entrance and exit being the stairs leading off left.

The scene reveals Junior's character, and how he reacts to the news that he has but a few moments left to live. At the start, he is still an obnoxious bully, demanding information from the guard and refusing to believe what he hears. As it occurs to him that his brothers might have betrayed him, he begins to break down and cries. His snivelling is so weak that it is hard to feel sorry for him, and he exits a pathetic figure, a pawn of the Court.
Act Three, Scene 5:

This scene is one of the most memorable in the play, for not only does it contain some of the most beautiful poetry, but also some of the most gruesome action.

The action of the scene revolves around Vindice's plot to kill the old Duke, and then his actual murder. In the first half of the scene, Vindice spends a lot of time philosophizing on the nature of women, all the while holding the skull of his dead mistress. The pace is slow and constant, with the tension mounting, waiting for the entrance of the Duke. Vindice's relaxation in that scene is similar to that of a cat, easy but ready to spring at the slightest provocation.

With the entrance of the Duke, the tempo accelerates, and the stage is a mad turmoil of bodies. The appearance of Spurio and the Duchess creates a short pause, but then the action picks right up again and finally the Duke dies.

The scene was played mainly centre stage, with an eerie blue light casting shadows for the revengers to hide in.

Unit I:

The purpose of this unit is to introduce the plot of the future action, the murder of the Duke. The stage directions were slightly altered, as Hippolito entered first. As he walks on stage, he appears to be waiting for someone, and with the entrance of Vindice, it is seen that Hippolito has
been asked by Vindice to meet him here for some apparent reason. As Vindice relates the plot to Hippolito, we are amazed as the latter and the scene takes on an air of secrecy. The climax of the unit comes with the entrance of Vindice with the skull dressed as a "lady".

Unit 2:

The purpose of this unit is to partially reveal the use of the skull in the murder of the Duke. Its complete function is not revealed until later.

In his obsessed manner, Vindice appears to be almost mad. Holding the skull of his mistress, he begins a bitter reflection on the nature of women as though he had all the time in the world. The contrast between what he is saying to the skull now and what he said in his opening soliloquy, is one indication of how he has changed during the course of the play.

Unit 3:

The purpose of this unit is to return to the point of the scene, the murder. Vindice turns abruptly from his thoughts to Hippolito, breaking the quiet of the past speech and quickly tells us of his plan. Two things immediately strike us - one that he is killing the Duke in a most grotesque and almost unnecessary manner, and secondly that he is defiling the memory of his love by using the skull for the poisoning, making a whore out of his mistress. These thoughts contrast with the obvious pleasure Vindice has.
Unit 4:

This short unit consists of the entrance of the Duke and his dismissal of his lord with an excuse to give if he is asked for. The whole attitude of the Duke is one of lust and impatience. He wants his satisfaction quickly, not willing to admit he is an ugly old man. As soon as "Piato" brings the Duke to the lady, he falls upon her and begins to take her right there. The scene is grotesque.

Unit 5:

The death of the Duke is a long affair and is drawn out by the torturing remarks of Vindice and Hippolito. It is also most theatrical. The Duke kisses the skull with passion and then screams with agony as his face begins to rot away. Vindice and Hippolito reveal themselves to the Duke and show themselves to be guilty of a needless cruelty. The scene is physically active and exciting, leading to the entrance of the Duchess and Spurio.

Unit 6:

The purpose of this short interlude is to show visually the Duke that he is being cuckolded, and thus torture him even more. The hot passion of the Duchess, the music, the hot night, all contrast with the hidden group of revengers on stage right. The situation created is ironic and consequently creates a tension on stage.

Unit 7:

With the death of the Duke, part of Vindice's
revenge is accomplished. The lightness of the two brothers at the end of the scene, underlies the nastiness that occurred throughout. This last unit relieves the tension that has been building, during the scene, and prepares us for the stupid situation which follows.
Act Three, Scene 6:

This last scene of the Act completes the action of the first half of the play.

The purpose of the scene is to re-introduce the two brothers, Ambitioso and Supervacuo, and show them failing at their plotting. In this scene they realize that they have failed and once more begin to blame each other in their childish fashion. Their shock at seeing Lussurioso alive is certainly comic for the audience. When the officer brings in the head, their dismay at finding out it is their brother's head, causes them to fall apart. Their failure is contrasted with the previous set of brothers' successful revenge. The scene is full of black humour, for even though what happens is gruesome, they are so silly and useless, that we must laugh at them.
Act Four, Scene I:

This scene begins a new plot line in the play and imparts some important information. During the course of the scene we see another side of Lussurioso which we have never seen before. He appears angry and obviously impatient. The scene begins with Lussurioso railing against 'Piato' for having made him almost kill his father. Then 'Piato' enters and we see in fact how angry Lussurioso really is. The rest of the scene concerns Lussurioso's attempt to find a replacement for 'Piato' and also to have him killed. He asks Hippolito if he has a brother, and finding the affirmative, orders him to come to Court. The irony of the situation revolves around the fact that 'Piato' is in fact Hippolito's brother. The scene ends with Lussurioso conversing with a lord and finding out that his father is gone from Court. This tells us that no-one at the Court is yet aware of his murder.

Unit I:

The purpose of this unit is to show Lussurioso's reaction to his recent predicament and his obvious displeasure at having been misled by 'Piato'. Hippolito is very insecure with the lord's dishumour and does not know if he is coming or going. He must of course agree with Lussurioso and when he sees his brother entering, he prepares for the worst.

Unit 2:

The purpose of this unit is merely to show on stage how angry Lussurioso really is. When 'Piato' enters,
Lussurioso is almost ready to kill him and only his fast escape saves Vindice.

Unit 3:

In this unit, Lussurioso asks Hippolito to have his brother come to Court. It is interesting because Hippolito is not sure whether or not Lussurioso is aware of 'Piato's' identity, and consequently he is really confused during this short unit.

Unit 4:

In this short soliloquy of Lussurioso's, it is revealed that he plans to have 'Piato' murdered. His decision involves no moral argument or thought. The simplicity with which he decides indicates his own lack of morality or sense of justice. The most important thing to him is his own sense of security.

Unit 5:

This last short unit includes simply a short conversation Lussurioso has with a noble, indicating his unawareness of the Duke's death.
Act Four, Scene 2:

The purpose of this scene is to quickly involve the audience in the action. There is little waiting for action from now on. This half of the play moves quickly with every scene involving a major action. Because of this acceleration of pace, it is important that the scenes start rapidly and not spend time in redundant explanations. Therefore the beginning of this scene was cut so that it started its momentum immediately.

Vindice appears on stage dressed as he was in the first scene and talking in a broad accent. The scene parallels an earlier one, in which Vindice meets Lussurioso dressed as 'Piato'. The scene ends with the brothers trying to decide how to find another 'Piato'.

Unit I:

The purpose of this unit is to inform the audience quickly of Vindice's disguise and to set up the scene between himself and Lussurioso. This unit also indicates that Vindice intends to murder Lussurioso, that he is not content with merely having killed the Duke, but desires more vengeance.

Unit 2:

This unit is basically a humorous one in which Vindice, speaking in a broad dialect, acts the part of a poor cynical scholar willing to do anything for a few pennies. And as Lussurioso appears to be baffled by the speech, he
also seems perturbed by it, for parts of it appear to be mocking. Nevertheless he hires Vindice to serve him.

Unit 3:

The purpose of this unit is to introduce the reason for the meeting and to further complicate the plot. Lussurioso's recounting of the imagined scene between 'Piato' and himself is comic in contrast to what really happened. Knowing Lussurioso to be a character without scruples or morals, it is interesting to see him try and apply good intentions to his motives. The main mood in the unit is one of mockery, both Vindice and Hippolito pretend anger towards 'Piato' and mock Lussurioso.

Unit 4:

In this short unit a completely new mood is established. Vindice and Lussurioso are left alone on stage. Lussurioso tells Vindice to kill his enemies and Vindice swears to do so. Although Lussurioso is not aware of the implications, the atmosphere is heavy with sudden intensity and he is relieved when Hippolito re-enters.

Unit 5:

This short unit furthers and complicates the plot. Hippolito says he has found 'Piato' drunk and will show him to Vindice. Lussurioso exits happy in the knowledge that the brothers will do their job. The unit serves to heighten the tension and raise the question again as to what they will do to find a substitute for 'Piato'.
Unit 6:

This unit serves two purposes. Firstly, it solves the problem raised above, quite ingeniously, by substituting the Duke's body dressed as 'Piato' for the latter. Secondly, it suspends the sub-plot for a while and moves on to another, that of the mother. Vindice and Hippolito rush off stage eager to confront their mother with her sin.
Act Four, Scene 3:

Tourneur once again parallels the two sets of brothers, and as usual Ambitioso and Supervacuo are ineffectual in their actions. In this scene they are given proof of their mother's incestuous relationship with Spurio. Yet they do not act positively one way or the other. Their following of the Duchess and her lover foreshadows the next scene. The pervading mood is one of treachery and hot passion.
Act Four, Scene 4:

This is one of the most active scenes in the play and the climax of the Act. The scene points up Gratiana's foulness, Castiza's strictness and the brothers' complicity in the events. It is singularly important to realize that the whole chain of events originated with Vindice and without his pre-occupation with revenge and justice, these things would not have occurred. The mother might or might not have been corrupted, but at least the son would not have been at fault.

Unit I:

The unit begins right in the middle of the action. Gratiana does not know what she is being accused of and when she finds out she denies it vehemently. The tone of the unit is frenzied. Gratiana runs away from the drawn daggers and Vindice and Hippolito corner her like a trapped animal.

Unit 2:

The moment Vindice reveals himself to her she totally collapses and confesses. The long pause after he says "I was the man" is filled with horror and fear, but Gratiana wittily gets out of her predicament by saying that no-one but him could have convinced her to do what she did. At this Vindice and Hippolito put away their daggers and leave, with Gratiana's promise to remain good and speak with Castiza.
Unit 3:

In this short unit there is a reversal of expectation. It is expected that Castiza will once more refuse to go to the Court, but she says the opposite. This reversal totally stuns Gratiana, and with the memory of cold steel at her throat she does her best to convince Castiza that her chastity is not worth any sacrifice.

Unit 4:

This unit merely presents all the arguments which Gratiana previously used against her now. Castiza remains firm in her decision however. As the situation becomes more frantic on Gratiana's part, she argues more and more persuasively. Finally at the high point of the confrontation, Castiza gives in and tells Gratiana that she was only testing her mother's virtue. The result is inevitable melodrama as mother and daughter embrace.

Unit 5:

The main mood of this short final unit is one of relief. Both women have reason to feel relieved but Gratiana's is stronger and more noticeable. It is more obvious that she feels she has saved her neck rather than her daughter's virtue.
Act Five, Scene I:

This scene concludes the business that Vindice and Hippolito thought up earlier about substituting the Duke's body for that of 'Piato'. It also establishes Lussurioso as the new Duke. Two interesting things arise from this scene: one is Vindice's unnecessary violence when stabbing the dead Duke, and secondly, the Court's reaction to the news that the Duke has been murdered.

Unit I:

This unit is the realization of the plan the brothers thought up earlier. They begin the scene pleased and happy with the way things have been working out, and drop the body where they are sure Lussurioso will find it. As soon as Lussurioso enters, they begin to look for the body. Naturally enough Lussurioso finds it, since the other two are looking somewhere in the opposite direction, and orders them to kill 'Piato'. Since Lussurioso tries to leave before they stab the body, it is interesting to watch Vindice try and keep him there. This was done by Vindice's senseless questioning of Lussurioso as to whether or not they should kill him while he was 'dead drunk'. Lussurioso, losing patience, orders them to do it immediately and the two brothers rush to the corpse. And yet again, Vindice creates an anti-climax by stopping and asking Lussurioso another question. By the time they actually stab the corpse, Vindice does it with a quiet vengeance. He breaks out in a quiet,
nervous laugh which Hippolito shares, and which Lussurioso joins after a moment. The three end the unit laughing heartily, all for different reasons, and causing a relief from the tension on stage.

**Unit 2:**

The sudden recognition of the Duke's body causes Lussurioso to go through a variety of reaction, establishing a totally different mood from the previous one. Lussurioso is most upset for only a moment. The main worry on his mind is that he be mistaken for his father's murderer, and has the two brothers sworn to secrecy. His obvious distraction adds to the joke which Vindice and Hippolito are now enjoying.

**Unit 3:**

The purpose of this unit is to show the reaction of the rest of the Court to the news of the Duke's death. Although no-one seems saddened by the loss, there is an air of waiting, as they all look to see what Lussurioso will do next. Since he is legitimately the new Duke, the power is now his, and no-one wants to be the first to test it.

**Unit 4:**

The purpose of this unit is simply to establish an order in the scene by making Lussurioso the new Duke. Lussurioso is more than pleased to have his new title, but there is not a comment from the rest of the Court. The lord who brought up the subject also suggests that celebrations might be in order, and everyone exits on a false note of gaiety.
Unit 5:

The purpose of this short unit is to have Lussurioso banish the Duchess, thus getting rid of her before the final scene, and leaving no ends dangling.

Unit 6:

The purpose of this unit is for Spurio to say what he really feels about the situation and have the two sets of brothers overhear.

Unit 7:

The purpose of this unit is to give Ambitioso and Supervacuo a new victim to pursue. They vow to kill the new Duke, and then in an aside Ambitioso says he shall kill his brother.

Unit 8:

The last in the play, the brothers have seen everything that has happened and now are ready for the finale. They speak their lines over the body of the Duke which is still lying on the stage, and then exit carrying it.

Act Five, Scene 2:

This scene was cut since it was unnecessary to the action of the play. I also felt it was logical to go from the previous scene where they mention the revels to the actual revels and inauguration of the new Duke.
Act Five, Scene 3:

This is the final scene in the play and the grand climax of the action. None of the major characters are left alive at the end, except for Vindice and Hippolito and they are being put to death. The figure who remains at the end to take over is Antonio, a minor revenge figure. The scene is visually the most exciting and dramatically the high point of the action. The stage is dark and a Court procession with music proceeds through the side arches which are lit in red, parallelling the opening scene. Then the banquet begins as the toasts are drunk. The atmosphere is one of forced joviality and good wishes, with the same kind of distrust evident throughout the play. With the entrance of the masquers the conspiracy begins and so does the bloodshed. By the end of the 'revels' all are left dead on stage, save for the brothers and Antonio. After the action of the preceding events, Vindice's confession is anti-climactic and somewhat ironic. Yet it also provides a quiet conclusion to the chaos just witnessed. We feel little sympathy for the man who took justice into his own hands and was blind to the results. We must however admire the figure that stands alone at the end unaware of anything except that he was right. Even Hippolito states that the action came from Vindice, he merely followed. Vindice exits, knowing that he has restored justice to the land.
Antonio is left alone on stage, and in his appraisal of the bodies and his final words to Vindice, we see the return of the same situation. In his last lines, Antonio underlines the corruption and evil that pervaded throughout the play. Blood cannot wash blood away, but he is not yet aware of this, and therefore he sentences Vindice to death. The cycle of power and corruption is ready to begin again.

Nothing has been solved by the action of the play.
DETAILS OF PRODUCTION
MUSIC CUES

Cue A: Following discovery of Vindice. Lights up slowly, and music starts low and fades up until all characters on stage.

Cue A': Following Vindice's line, page 45:
"Four ex'len t characters"
Fade sound slowly

Cue B: Following Vindice's line, page 49
"I'll quickly turn into another"
Five second pause then start strong with entrance music twice.

Cue C: Following Vindice's line, p.63
"In this disguise to try the faith of both"
Five second pause, then soft music for duration of scene.

INTERMISSION

Cue D: Following Vindice's line, p. 98
"Thy bastard, thy bastard rides a-hunting in thy brow"
Start low and fade up with entrance of Duchess and Spurio.

Cue E: Processional music to be played before Act 5, Scene 3 begins, while characters march through side arches.

Cue F: Banquet music begins immediately after processional ends; Enter Court figures, music up and remains until end of masque and entrance of Antonio, p.33, after Vindice's line:
"Pistols! Treason! Murder!
Help guard my lord the Duke".
LIGHT PLOT

Cue 1: Blackout, then slow up on centre, pin spot blue light.
Cue 2: Fade spot, then general night exterior up, central arch and side arches.
Cue 3: Cross fade arches down, central area up.
Cue 4: General exterior lights up full.
Cue 5: Blackout, then general Court interior up, with special on central arch.
Cue 6: Cross fade to centre only.
Cue 7: Cross from general exterior to central arch only, bathed in blue light.
Cue 8: Blackout, then general garden exterior up.
Cue 9: Cross fade down garden exterior and up general Court interior.
Cue 10: Cross fade general interior down, Arch I special up.
Cue 11: Special stage up left, then both specials cross fade to general Court interior.
Cue 12: Slow fade of general interior, leaving only up centre dimly lit.
Cue 13: Special blue "silhouette" light on central arch.
Cue 14: Slow cross fade to general interior when Duke enters, up full. Special off.
Cue 15: Blackout, then general Court interior up centre and left.
Cue 16: Cross fade to centre right then down right.
Cue 17: Blackout, then jail special on on second arch.
Cue 18: Cross fade to general night exterior.
Cue 19: Shaft of light on left arch for Duke's entrance, then fade down.
Cue 20: Central arch night light light up. Then off at exit of Duchess and Spurio.
Cue 21: Blackout, then general Court interior up.
Cue 22: Slow dim to blackout, five to eight seconds pause. House lights during intermission.
Cue 23: Blackout, then general Court interior.
Cue 24: Cross fade to upstage interior only, specials on both flights of stairs.
Cue 25: Blackout, then up general interior.
Cue 26: Blackout, then slowly fade up Court interior.
Cue 27: Court interior up full.
Cue 28: Blackout, then fade up red special on right aisle through arches for procession.
Cue 29: Cross fade to general lighting for Court interior very dim.
Cue 30: Special on central arch on full.
Cue 31: General Court interior up full with special red lights for masque.
Cue 32: Cross fade of special lights to general Court interior.
Cue 33: Dim slowly to blackout during last speech, leaving arch specials on. Then fade to blackout.
PROPERTY LIST

Act I, Scene 1

Skull (Vindice)
Two (2) torches (Noblemen)

Act I, Scene 2

Black letter (Judge)
Ducal chair (Duke)

Act I, Scene 4

Close curtains - centre arch

Act II, Scene 1

Stool (Castiza)
Diary and pen (Castiza)
Money bag and jewels (Vindice)

Act II, Scene 2

Sword (Vindice)
Sword (Lussurioso)

Act II, Scene 3

Signet ring (Duke)

Act III, Scene 1

Jewelled dagger (Ambitioso)

Act III, Scene 3

Signet ring (Ambitioso)
Money (Ambitioso)

Act III, Scene 4

Manacles (Junior)
Letter (Keeper)
Signet ring (Keeper)

Act III, Scene 5

Skull in cloak (Vindice)
Tiny bottle with poison (Vindice)
Small jewelled dagger (Duke)
Act III, Scene 6
Head in bloody sack (Officer)

Act IV, Scene 2
Money bag (Lussurioso)

Act IV, Scene 3
Two swords (Ambitioso, Supervacuo)

Act IV, Scene 4
Two swords (Vindice, Hippolito)

Act V, Scene I
Two swords (Vindice, Hippolito)

Act V, Scene 3
Table
Tablecloth
Goblets
Nine (9) swords
Six (6) masks
Three (3) chairs
One velvet cushion
Blood capsules
Sponges taped to underside of table
COSTUME PLOT

Duke: Gold tights, black jacket with gold specked large puffy sleeves, signet ring, bald wig, long gold brocade cloak with medal of office, gold and black hat (I, II.i, ii, III.v)
Red satin night gown (II, iii.)
Vindice's jacket and cloak (V, i.)

Lussurioso: Black tights, gold slippers, black bloomers with gold detail, gold cod piece and skirt, black jacket, black velvet and gold detail.

Spurio: Black tights and shoes, black satin jacket with red slits throughout. Jewelled dagger. Ruby earring in left ear, bearded face.

Ambitioso: Silver tights and shoes, black satin jacket, silver and black lace stiff collar and cuffs. Tightly fitting. Jewelled dagger, red and silver chain around neck. Pointed beard and mustache.

Supervacuo: Same as above but with fine detail. Without chain of office, no facial hair but putty nose to accentuate silly face.

Junior: Same as Ambitioso. Large silver codpiece but no chain or dagger (I, ii.)
White shirt and tights only (III, iii.)

Vindice: Black jacket and pants, tights and shoes. White shirt trimmed with red detail (I, i.)
Black tights, short black jacket with gold and red detail, long black wig and goatee (I, iii, iv) (II, i, ii, iii., III.v, IV.i)
Black tights and pants, long jacket and long cloak, no wig (IV, ii)
Without cloak (IV, iv)

Hippolito: Black tights and shoes. Short black jacket, dagger, chain of office.

Antonio: Black velvet jacket with white shirt and ruffles. Black tights and pants, white wig.

Nobles: Dark tights, jackets and slippers.

Dondolo: Brown jacket and tights, hunchback and crooked nose.
Duchess: Long heavy red dress with layers of black Spanish lace on top. Tightly fitting with low bodice and many strings of red and silver and black beads. Long tightly fitting silver sleeves with wide heavy sleeves on top, slit to the shoulders of same material as dress. Large stiff black and silver lace collar. Hair drawn completely off face under tight cap with veil hanging down behind. (I.ii, III.v, IV, iii, V.i) Black and red lace nightgown (II.iii)

Castiza: Long white gown of heavy silk. Gold detail down front, tight sleeves with little detail, gold cross around neck.


For the last scene, the Revengers (Vindice, Hippolito, Ambitioso, Supervacuo, Spurio and one nobleman) all wear black masks, black cloaks lined with red and all carry drawn swords.
26. Keyboard Canzona (early 17th c.)

*Canzona per l'epistolà*
The Dorothy Somerset Studio Theater presents.....

THE

REVENGER'S

TRAGEDY

Oct. 15, 16, 17, 18 - 8:30  
Matinee Oct. 16 - 12:30

$1.00  $1.50
THE REVENGERS TRAGEDY
by Cyril Tourneur
Directed by Jana Veverka
Designed by Michelle Bjornason
Music Arranged & Performed by Jim Colby

CAST

Duke .................................................. Wayne Robson
Lussurioso ............................................. Jeremy Newson
Spurio .................................................. Jeremy Long
Ambitioso .............................................. Larry Foden
Supervacuo ............................................ Darrell Evans
Junior .................................................. David MacKenzie
Vindice .................................................. Dermot Hennelly
Hippolito .............................................. Allan Lysell
Antonio .................................................. Don Ford
Dondolo .................................................. Garth Jickling
Judge, Keeper, Lord ................................. James Sait
Duchess .................................................. Rona Altrows
Castiza ................................................... Anne Louise Sauer
Gratiana ............................................... Anna-May McKeller
Noble ..................................................... Ron McEwen

The Scene: Italy, in and around the Duke's Palace

PRODUCTION

Technical Director ................................. Rick Spencer
Assistants to Director .............................. Mary Goodwin, David Welsh
Stage Manager .......................... Gordon Cavers
Lighting Execution .............................. Leslie Payne
Sound Execution ................................. Ciska Venera
Properties ........................................ Joyce Marek
Publicity .......................................... Jeremy Long, Larry Foden
House Manager ................................. Brian Parker

An M.A. Thesis Production presented by:
The U.B.C. Department of Theatre
Thesis Adviser Klaus Strassmann

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ALJEAU of Canada Ltd., N. Rothstein, M. Greenfield, Geraldine Richardson, Sherry Darcus, John Grey.

There will be one 10 minute Intermission
Virgins, virtue; love, lust and lechery; lies, intrigues and treacheries; chastities, cuckoldries, bawds, bastards and blood — it was like bench "W" in Alice's restaurant Wednesday night at the Dorothy Somerset Studio Theatre — there were mother stabbers and father stabbers and mother rapers and a glorious catalogue of sins, all played by a solemn faced, hollow-eyed passionately overpowering cast of characters involved in the most complicated story of double dealing since James Bond burst upon the world, all spitting, dripping, and hissing their lovely, surprisingly modern words, in a setting of cloisters, arches, hidden bedchambers and dark and dirty corners.

It was indeed Jacobean theatre. The only thing missing were the chickens running in the pit, the orange girls, the 60-minute intermissions and the good strong heady smell of sweat, beer and perfumed gentry.

The play, "The Revenger's Tragedy, is at least 350 years old, written at a time when audiences really liked a good look at the sins of the upper classes, when they liked their blood in buckets full and believed, even more strongly than Western movie fans, that virtue was its own reward, and that the bad guys always got it in the end.

Just about everybody in the Revengers is a bad guy. At one time there were six corpses littered about the stage, but before that there had been lecherous old men poisoned by kissing corpses in an excess of lust, a head in a sack tossed about like a football, daggers slipping in and out as casually as keys in door locks, plots, disguises, seductions, the whole works — theatre hot and strong with mustard, relish, salt, pepper and vinegar.

The production was an M.A. thesis production, directed by Jana Veverka and designed by Michelle Bjornson. For the first ten minutes the words got on top of the cast, they got lost in them, but it didn't really matter — there were all the other nice things happening, faces appearing in torchlight, Wayne Robson looking at least 500 years old as the old duke, Dermot Nenney laying melodramatic labels on everybody in the cast and the atmosphere building up. It took the audience a little longer to realize that it could laugh, that there was nothing wrong with treating the whole thing as a Marx Brothers romp, and from then on it was difficult not to be thoroughly entertained.

And it was equally difficult on the way home to accept the play's age, to realize that the humor, the subtleties of language and the movement of the evening were all pretty much as they had originally been written, and that they were capable, in that form, of being just as successful today as then.

The production runs through October 18, with a matinee at 12:30 today, evenings performances at 8:30. For a dollar and fifty cents I haven't had so much fun in a long time.
The play is presented with all the earnestness it might have commanded in its own day.

We find it amusing, of course, but the kind of laughter that rang out in the Dorothoy Somerset studio wasn’t the smug, self-satisfied laughter of those who feel superior to those now dead.

We laughed because the things that moved the men of the seventeenth century are not the things that move us. We do not call chastity a pearl. We are not taken in by supposed mistaken identity. The bounds of our belief snap when body piles upon body. All this may be to our disadvantage, but there it is. We laugh. We can’t help it.

Avenging a Murder

The plot of The Revenger’s Tragedy is far too convoluted to discuss here. Let me say only that a kind of bloody chain-reaction is set off when Vindice, an impoverished gentleman, sets out to avenge the death of his intended at the hands of a lustful old Duke. Let me whisper, too, that when the play opens Vindice is discovered with the skull of his dead beloved in his hands, like Hamlet astride Yorick’s grave. It goes on from there, ever mor horrendous.

The actors all handled themselves very well indeed. It might be said, of course, that some of the players tended to be a bit heavy-handed, but then I have a feeling that the original cast was probably a bit heavy-handed. It was the style of the times and the play seems to cry out for such treatment. To be subtle would be unthinkable.

It is essential, however, to know where to draw the line in these things, and the actors, led by the versatile Dermot Hennessy as Vindice and Wayne Robson as the wicked Duke, did so admirably.

The Revenger’s Tragedy is a dramatic curiosity and as such it has an honorable place in a university theatre. I do not hold with those who claim these things are merely museum pieces and having nothing to do with contemporary theatre. In the library, in the text, they are museum exhibits. Placed on a stage with actors to speak the lines they live again.

University theatres are museums only so long as the old plays linger on the library shelves or in the dusty minds of professors. In the hands of actors the play can cease to be an artifact and become a living thing again.

It is as if the curator of a museum put his hand on the dry bones of Brontosaurus and with a touch of magic restored flesh, claw and fire. The monster climbs down from its glass case and walks again.

For this reason I have a special spot in my heart for university theatres. The whole range of dramatic literature is open to them. They can look to the future and to the past. Their stage is a time-machine. Wednesday evening at U.B.C. we looked to the past. It was a brief season of great pleasure.
A catacomb: the somber-lit crypt, I was supposing of some abandoned, now decaying church.

A profusion of hooded corpses litters the set, as divine Justice, always present, takes wrathful vengeance on a decaying world. The play ends.

"'Tis a heavy season."—an aged, lone survivor, takes the talisman of power. For an age of order which is gone.

The tragedy of human revenge, the bloody chaos which ensues when sinful, secularized man takes justice into his own hands was a favorite theme of Jacobean drama. The Renaissance glorification of man was replacing the sacred order of the Middle Ages; man came face to face with his own deceitful vileness. And much evil ensued. The "Dance of Death" lurked threateningly within the blooming courtier.

The turn of the sixteenth century saw a desperate concern with the vile, sneaky problem of good and evil. The Revenger's Tragedy, by Cyril Tourneur—written in 1607—opened at the Dorothy Somerset Studio on Wednesday evening—the M.A. Thesis Production of Jana Veverka, with the set by Michelle Bjornson.

"An network of ironic illustrations of villainy hoisted on its own petard, and of divine vengeance contrasted with human." Man, in his vileness, cannot judge, cannot govern himself. The black within only turns outward and destroys.

"I am hired to kill myself", writes Tourneur (as Vindice) with bloody irony dripping from his pen.

The dramatist is fascinated with the macabre. His images are the hood, the flashing dagger, and centrally, the Skull. The skull which is the black inside, the skull who's poisoned, bony lips sleezily offer the kiss of death.

Imagine any kind of sin—including mother-rape and father-kill—and Tourneur has put it in. Imagine a world (the satanic crypt) defined by its suspicion and distrust, where only the most deceitful will survive—for a while.

Were't not for 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.

Everyone, every character (all are basically figures of vice) in the play is damned deterministically from the beginning—the atmosphere drips with death.

The power of this play—which is more tragic melodrama than tragedy—lies in Tourneur's compressed, heavily ironic language.

And the student cast of Jana Veverka's production handled the heavy blank verse extremely well. The language of deceit: Dermot Hennely was terrific as the eel-like Vindice, and so was Jeremy Newson as the doomed Lussorioso.

And Wayne Robson: "doth his age belie," as the eighty-year-old lecher Duke.

"My hairs are grey, but yet my sins are green."

A finely-controlled production, a fine set, and very fine lighting. The whole evening was beautifully macabre, and once in the rhythm of the thing, one could laugh—laugh hard and blackly.

After all, the theme, the moral, the whole mood, is not tremendously difficult to get into. In our times.

The play continues tonight and Saturday at 8:30 p.m.
Cyril Tourneur, actor and playwright, was a man who knew how to end a show with a bang. His The Revenger’s Tragedy, revived out at UBC this week, ends as rigor mortis slowly establishes itself in six bloody corpses scattered about the acting area. Several other bodies are already turning to dust in the wings.

For those with seventeenth century tastes, The Revenger’s Tragedy has everything. Lust, incest, rape, murder and common violence contend with one another for attention. Severed heads are carried onstage in blood-soaked burlap bags, blood squirts from those who have been pricked with daggers; nothing whatever is left to the imagination.

It is revealing of the nature of man, however, that most of the love-making in the play — and there is a great deal of it — goes on behind closed curtains. Man was ever one to hide his good deeds.

Blood and thunder loomed large on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stages. The public liked violence and bloodshed and the commercial theatre managers of the day, who enjoyed eating as much as the commercial theatre managers of our own time, gave the public what it liked in full measure.

The Violent Bard

William Shakespeare, that sweet swan of Avon, was in the business to make money too and there were times when even he had to cater to the vulgar taste. He was up against such playwrights as Thomas Kyd, author of The Spanish Tragedy, one of the major hits of the era. If a play by Shakespeare or Jonson wasn’t drawing full houses, an astute manager would call for a revival of The Spanish Tragedy in the full knowledge that the public would eat it up.

Who can forget the telling scene in which old Hieronimo, Marshal of Spain, staggers out into the dark garden in his night-shirt and bumps into the twirling corpse of his son, Horatio? The Elizabethans loved it and called for more.

Shakespeare obviously tried to rise above such things, but there were occasions when his company was hard pressed and he threw caution to the winds.

Poor old Gloucester in King Lear has his eyes plucked out and Titus Andronicus contains enough violence to make even Kyd uneasy. When Hamlet ends, there are quite as many bodies strewn about the stage as there are in The Revenger’s Tragedy; most of them simply perish in a more dignified manner.

We may shudder and fall back, but the first audiences thought nothing amiss. Bloodshed and gore were a part of their lives.

It was a common sight in those days to see severed heads rotting in public places. A quiet drive in the country could easily produce the sight of a dead robber rotting in chains at a crossroads or hanging in fetters from a tree in some public place.

Picnic at a Scaffold

The citizens of London went in their hundreds to Tyburn to witness executions, many of them taking box lunches with them. When the punishment was for treason, even larger crowds turned up to see the victim partially hanged, cut down still living, disembowelled, emasculated, quartered and then toasted on a bonfire.

The theatres were hard pressed to supply tempting offerings to lure the crowd from such free amusements. We need not be smug and say that we have changed so much that John Webster, if he wrote today, would shrink from having a severed hand delivered as he did in his Duchess of Malfi. Just count the number done to death in television dramas every week.

Public hanging wasn’t discontinued out of consideration for the victims, but because those attending seemed to enjoy it so much. Anyone who has ever watched a would-be suicide on the ledge of a building and listened to the comments of the crowd below, will know that a certain old savagery remains, Tourneur and Webster lived only yesterday.
"Maids and their honours are like poor beginners,
Were not sin rich there would be fewer sinners."

II i

"Here's Envy with a poor thin cover o'er't
Like scarler hid in lawn, easily spied through"

II iii
"Brother, let my opinion sway you once, .... to have him die, surest and soonest."

III i

"Oh, 't'as poisoned me!"

III v
"When the bad bleeds, then is the tragedy good."

III v

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

IV iv
Gratiana: 'Tis unfruitful, held tedious, to repeat what's past
I'm now your present mother.
Castiza: Push, now 'tis too late.

IV iv

"Nimbly done! Ha! Oh villains, murderers!
'Tis the old Duke my father!"
"Brothers, and Bastard, you dance next in hell."

Then I proclaim myself! Now am I Duke."
NOTE:
ALL COLUMNS (EXCEPT 2 DOOR PILLARS) & CANTILEVER PILLARS HAVE MOULDING UP TO A HEIGHT OF 6'2" FROM FLOOR LEVEL, EXTENDING TO HEIGHT OF 7'0" FROM GROUND LEVEL.

TWO DOOR ENTRANCES
(4 & 7 ON FLOOR PLAN)
AND 7'0" AT HIGHEST POINT OF ARCH FROM LEVEL OF PLATFORM UNIT
(7'0" FROM FLOOR LEVEL). ACTUALLY, MOULDING TRIM IS AT A HEIGHT OF 6'2" FROM FLOOR LEVEL (4'10" FROM PLATFORM LEVEL) AT MIDDLE OF ARCH, ALSO FROM THIS HEIGHT.

All columns which are to be made are to be 12" SQUARE ON SURFACE LEVEL.
THE 3 COLUMNS ALONG FRONT IN FLOOR WILL BE:
12" APART AT BASE.