

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI

by John Webster

Dramatis Personae:

DUCHESS OF MALFI.

CARIOLA, her woman.

JULIA, the Cardinal's mistress/GUARD/1st EXECUTIONER/MADWOMAN.

DELIA, Antonio's friend/GUARD/2nd EXECUTIONER/MADWOMAN.

FERDINAND, Duke of Calabria.

CARDINAL, his brother/MADMAN.

ANTONIO, steward of the Household to the Duchess/MADMAN.

DANIEL DE BOSOLA, Gentleman of the Horse to the Duchess.

Act I.

Act I, scene I *[A party. The whole cast enters.]*

DELIA. You are welcome to your country, dear Antonio. You have been long in France, and you return a very formal Frenchman in your habit. How do you like the French court?

ANTONIO. I admire it, Delia; in seeking to reduce both state and people to a fixed order, their judicious king begins at home; quits first his royal palace of flattering sycophants, of dissolute and infamous persons, considering duly that a prince's court is like a common fountain, whence should flow pure silver drops in general, but if it chance some cursed example poison it near the head, death and diseases through the whole land spread. Here comes Bosola.

DELIA. And here's the cardinal.

BOSOLA. I do haunt you still.

CARDINAL. So.

BOSOLA. I have done you better service than to be slighted thus. Miserable age, where only the reward of doing well is the doing of it.

CARDINAL. You enforce your merit too much.

BOSOLA. I fell into the galleys in your service where, for two years together, I wore two towels instead of a shirt, with a knot on the shoulder, after the fashion of a Roman mantle. Slighted thus? I will thrive some way. Blackbirds fatten best in hard weather, why not I in these dog-days?

CARDINAL. Would you could become honest.

BOSOLA. With all your divinity do but direct me the way to it.

[CARDINAL moves away to find the DUCHESS.]

BOSOLA. Are you gone? Some fellows, they say, are possessed with the devil but this great fellow were able to possess the greatest devil and make him worse.

ANTONIO. He hath denied thee some suit?

BOSOLA. Who would rely upon these miserable dependences in expectation to be advanced tomorrow? There are rewards for hawks and dogs when they have done us service but for a soldier, that hazards his limbs in a battle; nothing. Fare ye well, sir.

[BOSOLA moves away.]

DELIA. I knew this fellow seven years in the galleys for a notorious murder, and 'twas thought the cardinal suborned it.

ANTONIO. 'Tis great pity he should be thus neglected. I have heard he's very valiant. This foul melancholy will poison all his goodness. Here comes the great Calabrian duke.

[FERDINAND approaches DELIA]

FERDINAND. Who took the ring oftenest?

DELIA. Antonio Bologna, my lord.

FERDINAND. Our sister duchess' great-master of her household? Give him the jewel. How do you like my Spanish jennet?

DELIA. He is all fire.

FERDINAND. I am of Pliny's opinion, I think he was begot by the wind; he runs as if he were ballasted with quicksilver.

DELIA. True, my lord, he reels from the tilt often.

[ANTONIO laughs]

FERDINAND. Why do you laugh? Methinks you should laugh when I laugh, were the subject never so witty.

ANTONIO. My lord.

FERDINAND. You are a good horseman, Antonio. You have excellent riders in France: what do you think of good horsemanship?

ANTONIO. Nobly, my lord, out of brave horsemanship arises the first sparks of growing resolution that raises the mind to noble action.

FERDINAND. You have bespoke it worthily.

[FERDINAND moves away to join the CARDINAL and DUCHESS]

DELIA. *[to ANTONIO]* Now, sir, what's that cardinal?

ANTONIO. He is a melancholy churchman, he strews in his way flatterers, panders, intelligencers, atheists and a thousand such political monsters. He should have been Pope but, instead of coming to it by the primitive decency of the church, he did bestow bribes so largely and so impudently as if he would have carried it away without heaven's knowledge.

DELIA. What's his brother?

ANTONIO. The duke? A most perverse and turbulent nature. What appears in him mirth is merely outside. If he laugh heartily it is to laugh all honesty out of fashion.

DELIA. Twins?

ANTONIO. In quality. He never pays debts unless they be shrewd turns and those he will confess that he doth owe. But for their sister, the right noble duchess, you never fixed your eye on three fair medals cast in one figure of so different temper. While she speaks, she throws upon a man so sweet a look that it were able to raise one to a galliard that lay in a dead palsy and to dote on that sweet countenance.

[The DUCHESS whispers a message to CARIOLA to pass on to ANTONIO]

CARIOLA. *[to ANTONIO]* You must attend my lady in the gallery some half an hour hence.

ANTONIO. I shall, Cariola.

[Exeunt ANTONIO with CARIOLA. The DUCHESS starts to follow and is called back by FERDINAND]

FERDINAND. Sister, I have a suit to you.

DUCHESS. To me, sir?

FERDINAND. A gentleman here, Daniel de Bosola, one that was in the galleys...

DUCHESS. Yes, I know him.

FERDINAND. ...a worthy fellow he is. Pray, let me entreat for the provisorship of your horse.

DUCHESS. Your knowledge of him commends him and prefers him.

[The DUCHESS withdraws but stays on.]

FERDINAND. *[to DELIA]* Call him hither.

[DELIA fetches BOSOLA and then leaves.]

CARDINAL. Be sure you entertain that Bosola for your intelligence. I would not be seen in it and therefore many times I have slighted him when he did court our furtherance, as this morning.

FERDINAND. Antonio, the great master of her household, had been far fitter.

CARDINAL. No, you are deceived in him, his nature is too honest for such business. I'll leave you.

[Exit CARDINAL. BOSOLA approaches]

BOSOLA. I was lured to you.

FERDINAND. My brother here, the cardinal, could never abide you.

BOSOLA. Never since he was in my debt.

FERDINAND. Maybe some oblique character in your face made him suspect you?

BOSOLA. Does he study physiognomy? There's no more credit to be given to the face than to a sick man's urine. He did suspect me wrongfully and to suspect a friend unworthily prompts him to deceive you.

FERDINAND. *[gives BOSOLA money]* There's gold.

BOSOLA. What follows? Whose throat must I cut?

FERDINAND. Your inclination to shed blood rides post before my occasion to use you. I give you that to live in the court here, and observe the duchess; to note all the particulars of her behaviour, what suitors do solicit her for marriage and whom she best affects. She's a young widow, I would not have her marry again.

BOSOLA. No, sir?

FERDINAND. Do not you ask the reason but be satisfied, I said I would not. There is a place that I procured for you this morning, the provisorship of the horse. Have you heard of it?

BOSOLA. No.

FERDINAND. 'Tis yours. Be yourself, keep your old garb of melancholy, 'twill express you envy those that stand above your reach.

BOSOLA. The provisorship of the horse? Say, then, my corruption grew out of horse-dung: I am your creature.

[DUCHESS, CARDINAL and CARIOLA approach.]

FERDINAND. *[to BOSOLA]* Away.

[Exit BOSOLA.]

Act I, scene 2

CARDINAL. *[to DUCHESS]* Sister, we are to part from you and your own discretion must now be your director.

FERDINAND. You are a widow, you know already what man is and therefore let not youth, high promotion, eloquence...

CARDINAL. ...no, nor anything without the addition, honour, sway your high blood.

FERDINAND. Marry, they are most luxurious will wed twice.

DUCHESS. Diamonds are of most value, they say, that have passed through most jewellers' hands.

FERDINAND. Whores by that rule are precious.

DUCHESS. Will you hear me? I'll never marry.

CARDINAL. So most widows say but commonly that motion lasts no longer than the turning of an hour-glass: the funeral sermon and it end both together.

FERDINAND. Now hear me, you live in a rank pasture, here in the court there is a kind of honey-dew that's deadly, it will poison your fame; look to it.

DUCHESS. This is terrible good counsel.

FERDINAND. Yet believe it, your darkest actions, nay, your privatest thoughts, will come to light.

CARDINAL. You may flatter yourself and take your own choice; privately be married under the eaves of night...

FERDINAND. ...think it the best voyage that e'er you made but observe; such weddings may more properly be said to be executed than celebrated...

CARDINAL. ...the marriage night is the entrance into some prison...

FERDINAND. ...and those joys, those lustful pleasures, are like heavy sleeps which do forerun man's mischief.

CARDINAL. Fare you well. Wisdom begins at the end: remember it.

[CARDINAL exits.]

DUCHESS. I think this speech between you both was studied, it came so roundly off.

FERDINAND. *[draws his dagger]* You are my sister. This was my father's poniard, do you see? I'd be loth to see it look rusty, 'cause 'twas his. Fare ye well; women like that part which, like the lamprey, hath ne'er a bone in it.

DUCHESS. *[shocked]* Fie sir!

FERDINAND. Nay, I mean the tongue. What cannot a neat knave with a smooth tale make a woman believe? Farewell, lusty widow.

[Exit FERDINAND.]

DUCHESS. Shall this move me? If all my royal kindred lay in my way unto this marriage I'd make them my low footsteps. Cariola, to thy known secrecy I have given up more than my life - my fame.

CARIOLA. Both shall be safe, for I'll conceal this secret from the world as warily as those that trade in poison keep poison from their children.

DUCHESS. I believe it. Is Antonio come?

CARIOLA. He attends you.

DUCHESS. Good, dear soul, leave me; but place thyself where thou mayst overhear us. Wish me good speed.

[CARIOLA conceals herself. Enter ANTONIO]

DUCHESS. I sent for you, sit down. Take pen and ink, and write. Are you ready?

ANTONIO. Yes.

DUCHESS. What did I say?

ANTONIO. That I should write somewhat.

DUCHESS. O, I remember. After these triumphs and this large expense it's fit, like thrifty husbands, we inquire what's laid up for to-morrow.

ANTONIO. So please your beauteous excellence.

DUCHESS. *[flattered]* Beauteous? I thank you, I look young for your sake.

ANTONIO. *[gets up to leave]* I'll fetch your grace the particulars of your revenue and expense.

DUCHESS. *[stops him going]* You mistook. When I said I meant to make inquiry what's laid up for to-morrow, I did mean what's laid up yonder, for me.

ANTONIO. Where?

DUCHESS. In heaven. I am making my will, as 'tis fit princes should, in perfect memory. If I had a husband now, this care were quit, but I intend to make you overseer. What good deed shall we first remember? Say.

ANTONIO. Begin with the sacrament of marriage. I'd have you first provide for a good husband. Give him all.

DUCHESS. All?

ANTONIO. Yes, your excellent self.

DUCHESS. In a winding-sheet?

ANTONIO. In a couple.

DUCHESS. That were a strange will!

ANTONIO. 'Twere stranger if there were no will in you to marry again.

DUCHESS. What do you think of marriage?

ANTONIO. I take it, as those that deny purgatory, it locally contains or heaven or hell; there's no third place in it.

DUCHESS. How do you affect it?

ANTONIO. Say a man never marry, nor have children, what takes that from him? Only the bare name of being a father, or the weak delight to see the little wanton ride a-cock-horse upon a painted stick, or hear him chatter like a taught starling.

DUCHESS. Fie, fie, what's all this? One of your eyes is blood-shot. Use my ring to it, they say 'tis very sovereign. 'Twas my wedding-ring and I did vow never to part with it but to my second husband.

ANTONIO. You have parted with it now.

DUCHESS. Yes, to help your eye-sight.

ANTONIO. You have made me stark blind.

DUCHESS. How?

ANTONIO. There is a saucy and ambitious devil is dancing in this circle.

DUCHESS. Remove him.

ANTONIO. How?

DUCHESS. There needs small conjuration, when your finger may do it, thus. Is it fit?

[She puts the ring upon his finger: ANTONIO kneels.]

ANTONIO. What said you?

DUCHESS. Sir, this goodly roof of yours is too low built. Raise yourself; or, if you please, my hand to help you: so. *[She lifts him to his feet.]*

ANTONIO. Ambition, madam, is a great man's madness. I am not so stupid but I aim whereto your favours tend but he's a fool that, being cold, would thrust his hands in the fire to warm them.

DUCHESS. The misery of us that are born great! We are forced to woo because none dare woo us. Go, go brag you have left me heartless; mine is in your bosom, I hope it will multiply love there. You do tremble; make not your heart so dead a piece of flesh to fear more than to love me. Be confident. What is't distracts you? This is flesh and blood, sir; 'tis not the figure cut in alabaster kneels at my husband's tomb. Awake, awake man! I do here put off all vain ceremony and only do appear to you a young widow that claims you for her husband.

ANTONIO. Truth speak for me; I will remain the constant sanctuary of your good name.

DUCHESS. I thank you, gentle love. And, 'cause you shall not come to me in debt, being now my steward, here upon your lips I sign your quietus est. *[she kisses him, he is still reluctant to kiss her back]* This you should have begged now, I have seen children oft eat sweetmeats thus, as fearful to devour them too soon. *[they kiss again, this time ANTONIO kisses her back]*.

ANTONIO. But for your brothers?

DUCHESS. Do not think of them. Kneel. *[calling to off-stage]* Cariola?

[CARIOLA comes in, ANTONIO tries to break away from the DUCHESS.]

DUCHESS. Be not amazed; this woman's of my counsel. I have heard lawyers say a contract in a chamber is absolute marriage. *[She kneels with ANTONIO.]* Bless, heaven, this sacred gordian which let violence never untwine.

ANTONIO. And may our sweet affections, like the spheres, be still in motion that we may imitate the loving palms, *[he puts his hand to hers]* best emblem of a peaceful marriage, that never bore fruit, divided.

DUCHESS. How can the church bind faster? We now are man and wife, and 'tis the church that must but echo this. *[covers her eyes]* I now am blind.

ANTONIO. What's your conceit in this?

DUCHESS. I would have you lead your fortune by the hand unto your marriage-bed. We'll only lie and talk together and plot to appease my humorous kindred. If you please, lay a naked sword between us to keep us chaste.

[Exeunt DUCHESS and ANTONIO.]

CARIOLA. Whether the spirit of greatness or of woman reign most in her, I know not, but it shows a fearful madness. I owe her much of pity.

[exit CARIOLA]

Act II (nine months later)

Act II, scene I *[Enter BOSOLA with a basket of apricots and wearing a hat]*

BOSOLA. I observe our duchess is sick a-days, she pukes, her stomach seethes, she wanes in the cheek and waxes fat in the flank and, contrary to our Italian fashion, wears a loose-bodied gown: there's somewhat in't. I have a trick may chance discover it, I have bought some apricocks, the first our spring yields.

[Enter ANTONIO, wearing a hat, and DELIA, talking together]

DELIA. And so long since married? You amaze me.

ANTONIO. Let me seal your lips for ever for, did I think that anything but the air could carry these words from you, I should wish you had no breath at all. *[to BOSOLA]* Now, sir, in your contemplation? You are studying to become a great wise fellow.

BOSOLA. O sir, let me be simply honest.

ANTONIO. I do understand your inside, sir.

BOSOLA. Do you so?

ANTONIO. Because you would not seem to appear to the world puffed up with your preferment you continue this out of fashion melancholy. Leave it, leave it.

BOSOLA. Shall I confess myself to you? I look no higher than I can reach, they are the gods that must ride on winged horses, for mark me; when a man's mind rides faster than his horse can gallop, they quickly both tire.

[Enter DUCHESS, visibly pregnant but dressed in a loose dress to cover it, and CARIOLA. The men take off their hats.]

DUCHESS. Your arm, Antonio: do I not grow fat? I am exceeding short-winded. Bosola, I would have you, sir, provide for me a litter, such a one as the

Duchess of Florence rode in.

BOSOLA. The duchess used one when she was great with child.

DUCHESS. *[to BOSOLA]* I think she did. *[to ANTONIO]* I have heard you say that the French courtiers wear their hats on 'fore that king.

ANTONIO. I have seen it.

DUCHESS. In the presence?

ANTONIO. Yes.

DUCHESS. Why should not we bring up that fashion? Be you the example to the rest of the court; put on your hat first. *[she puts his hat back on for him].*

ANTONIO. *[taking his hat off again]* You must pardon me, I have seen, in colder countries than in France, nobles stand bare to the prince; and the distinction, methought, showed reverently.

BOSOLA. I have a present for your grace.

DUCHESS. For me, sir?

BOSOLA. Apricocks, madam.

DUCHESS. O sir, where are they? I have heard of none to-year.

BOSOLA. *[aside]* Good, her colour rises.

[BOSOLA offers her the basket of apricots]

DUCHESS. *[choosing one]* Indeed, I thank you: they are wondrous fair ones. What an unskilful fellow is our gardener, we shall have none this month.

BOSOLA. Will not your grace pare them?

DUCHESS. *[eating the apricot]* No. They taste of musk, methinks; indeed they do.

BOSOLA. I know not, yet I wish your grace had pared them.

DUCHESS. Why?

BOSOLA. I forgot to tell you, the knave gardener, only to raise his profit by them the sooner, did ripen them in horse-dung.

DUCHESS. O, you jest. *[to ANTONIO]* You shall judge: pray, taste one.

ANTONIO. Indeed, madam, I do not love the fruit.

DUCHESS. Sir, you are loth to rob us of our dainties. 'Tis a delicate fruit; they say they are restorative.

BOSOLA. *[aside to the audience]* How greedily she eats them. But for her loose-bodied gown, I should have discovered apparently the young springal cutting a caper in her belly.

DUCHESS. I thank you, Bosola, they were right good ones if they do not make me sick.

ANTONIO. How now, madam?

DUCHESS. This green fruit and my stomach are not friends. How they swell me!

BOSOLA. *[Aside.]* Nay, you are too much swelled already. There's no question but her tetchiness, and most vulturous eating of the apricocks, are apparent signs of breeding.

DUCHESS. O, I am in an extreme cold sweat!

BOSOLA. I am very sorry.

DUCHESS. To my chamber. O good Antonio, I fear I am undone!

[Exeunt DUCHESS and CARIOLA. ANTONIO indicates to BOSOLA he should leave, exit BOSOLA.]

ANTONIO. O my most trusty Delia, we are lost! I fear she's fallen in labour and there's left no time for her remove.

DELIA. Have you prepared her lady to attend her and procured safe conveyance for the midwife your duchess plotted?

ANTONIO. I have.

DELIA. Make use, then, of this forced occasion. Give out that Bosola hath poisoned her with these apricocks, that will give some colour for her keeping close.

ANTONIO. Fie, fie, the physicians will then flock to her.

DELIA. For that you may pretend she'll use some prepared antidote of her own, lest the physicians should re-poison her.

[We hear the DUCHESS cry out in pain off-stage.]

ANTONIO. I am lost in amazement, I know not what to think on't. Shut up the court-gates.

[DELIA runs off.]

ANTONIO. *[calls out loud]* Treason!

[re-enter BOSOLA]

BOSOLA. Why, sir? What's the danger?

ANTONIO. The foulest treason! Shut up the posterns presently.

BOSOLA. I shall instantly. *[Aside.]* If that these apricocks should be poisoned now without my knowledge?

ANTONIO. Sir, we have lost much plate and, but this evening, jewels to the value of four thousand ducats are missing in the duchess' cabinet.

[re-enter DELIA]

ANTONIO. *[to DELIA]* Are the gates shut?

DELIA. Yes.

ANTONIO. 'Tis the duchess' pleasure each officer be locked into his chamber 'till the sun-rising. She is very sick.

[enter CARIOLA]

BOSOLA. *[to ANTONIO]* At her pleasure.

ANTONIO. She entreats you take it not ill: the innocent shall be the more approved by it.

[exit BOSOLA]

ANTONIO. *[to CARIOLA]* How fares it with the duchess?

CARIOLA. Sir, you are the happy father of a son, your wife commends him to you.

ANTONIO. Blessed comfort!

DELIA. I wish you all the joys of a blessed father.

ANTONIO. *[to CARIOLA]* For heaven' sake, tend her well: I'll presently go set a figure for his nativity.

[Exeunt ANTONIO, CARIOLA and DELIA.]

Act II, scene 2, later that night. *[Enter BOSOLA with a lantern]*

BOSOLA. Sure I did hear a woman shriek and the sound came, if I received it right, from the duchess' lodgings. There's some stratagem in confining all our courtiers to their several wards.

[Enter ANTONIO with a lantern and a piece of paper]

ANTONIO. Who's there? What art thou? Speak.

BOSOLA. Antonio? I am Bosola, your friend.

ANTONIO. Bosola! Heard you not a noise even now?

BOSOLA. From whence?

ANTONIO. From the duchess' lodging.

BOSOLA. Not I. Did you?

ANTONIO. I did, or else I dreamed.

BOSOLA. Let's walk towards it.

ANTONIO. No. Maybe 'twas but the rising of the wind.

BOSOLA. Very likely. Methinks 'tis very cold, and yet you sweat, you look wildly.

ANTONIO. What's that to you? 'Tis rather to be questioned what design, when all men were commanded to their lodgings, makes you a night-walker?

BOSOLA. In sooth, I'll tell you, now all the courts asleep I thought the devil had least to do here, I came to say my prayers. If it do offend you I do so, you are a fine courtier.

ANTONIO. You gave the duchess apricocks to-day, pray heaven they were not poisoned.

BOSOLA. Poisoned? A Spanish fig for the imputation!

ANTONIO. Traitors are ever confident 'till they are discovered. There were jewels stolen too. In my conceit, none are to be suspected more than yourself.

BOSOLA. You are a false steward.

ANTONIO. *[seizes BOSOLA]* Saucy slave, I'll pull thee up by the roots.

BOSOLA. Maybe the ruin will crush you to pieces.

ANTONIO. You are an impudent snake indeed, sir. *[puts a bloodstained, embroidered handkerchief to his face and he accidentally drops the paper. Aside]* My nose bleeds. One that were superstitious would count this ominous. Two letters that are wrought here for my name are drowned in blood. Mere accident. *[to BOSOLA]* For you, sir, this door you pass not. I do not hold it fit that you come near the duchess' lodgings, till you have quit yourself.

[Exit ANTONIO.]

BOSOLA. *[searching the ground with his lantern]* Antonio hereabout did drop a paper. Here it is. What's here? A child's nativity calculated! *[Reads.]* 'The duchess was delivered of a son 'tween the hours twelve and one in the night, 'decimo nono Decembris,' - that's this night - 'taken according to the meridian of Malfi'. That's our duchess: happy discovery! Why, now 'tis most apparent; this fellow is the duchess' bawd. If one could find the father now but that, time will discover. I'll send a letter that shall make her brothers' galls o'erflow their livers. Though lust do mask in ne'er so strange disguise, she's oft found witty, but is never wise.

[Exit BOSOLA.]

Act II, scene 3. *[Enter CARDINAL in full cardinal's robes and JULIA]*

CARDINAL. Prithee, tell me, what trick didst thou invent to come to Rome without thy husband?

JULIA. Why, my lord, I told him I came to visit an old anchorite here for devotion.

CARDINAL. Thou art a witty false one. I mean, to him.

JULIA. You have prevailed with me beyond my strongest thoughts, I would not now find you inconstant.

CARDINAL. Do not put thyself to such a voluntary torture, which proceeds out of your own guilt.

JULIA. How, my lord?

CARDINAL. You fear my constancy, because you have approved those giddy and wild turnings in yourself.

JULIA. Did you e'er find them?

CARDINAL. Sooth, generally for women. A man might strive to make glass malleable ere he should make them fixed.

JULIA. So, my lord.

CARDINAL. Why do you weep? Are tears your justification? The self-same tears will fall into your husband's bosom, lady, with a loud protestation that you love him above the world.

JULIA. This is very well, my lord.

CARDINAL. Come, I'll love you wisely, that's jealously; since I am very certain you cannot make me cuckold.

JULIA. I'll go home to my husband.

CARDINAL. You may thank me, lady, I have taken you off your melancholy perch, bore you upon my fist, and showed you game and let you fly at it. I pray thee, kiss me. When thou wast with thy husband thou wast watched like a tame elephant; thou hadst only kisses from him, and high feeding, but what delight was that? Twas just like one that had a little fingering on the lute yet cannot tune it.

JULIA. You told me of a piteous wound in the heart, and a sick liver, when you wooed me first.

[There is a knock at the door.]

CARDINAL. Who's that? *[CARDINAL and JULIA step apart.]* Rest firm, for my affection to thee, lightning moves slow to it.

[Enter DELIA wearing a coat and with a letter]

DELIA. Sir, I have a letter that's come post from Malfi. *[gives the letter to the CARDINAL]*

CARDINAL. I'll withdraw. *[CARDINAL withdraws to read the letter but stays on stage.]*

JULIA. Delia, you are welcome.

DELIA. I was bold to come and see you. Do you lie here?

JULIA. No, our Roman prelates do not keep lodgings for ladies.

DELIA. Very well. Lady, I know not whether you want money, but I have brought you some.

JULIA. From my husband?

DELIA. No, from mine own allowance.

JULIA. I must hear the condition ere I be bound to take it.

DELIA. Look on it; hath it not a fine colour?

JULIA. I have a bird more beautiful.

DELIA. Try the sound on't.

JULIA. A lute string far exceeds it. Pray, let me know your business and your suit as briefly as can be.

DELIA. With good speed. *[DELIA whispers to JULIA]*

JULIA. *[considering DELIA's proposal]* Sir, I'll go ask my husband and straight return your answer.

[Exit JULIA.]

Act II, scene 4

[Enter FERDINAND with the horoscope stolen by BOSOLA]

FERDINAND. Read there, a sister damned, grown a notorious strumpet!

CARDINAL. Speak lower. *[sends DELIA away.]*

[exit DELIA.]

FERDINAND. Lower? O, confusion seize her! She hath had most cunning bawds to serve her turn, and more secure conveyances for lust than towns of garrison for service.

CARDINAL. Is't possible? Can this be certain?

FERDINAND. Rhubarb! O, for rhubarb to purge this choler! Here's the cursed day to prompt my memory and here it shall stick 'till of her bleeding heart I make a sponge to wipe it out.

CARDINAL. Why do you make yourself so wild a tempest?

FERDINAND. Would I could be one, that I might toss her palace 'bout her ears, root up her goodly forests, blast her meads and lay her general territory as waste as she hath done her honours!

CARDINAL. Shall our blood be thus attainted?

FERDINAND. Apply desperate physic; we must not now use balsamum but fire, the smarting cupping glass, for that's the mean to purge infected blood, such blood as hers! *[weeping]* There is a kind of pity in mine eye, I'll give it to my handkercher; and now 'tis here, I'll bequeath this to her bastard.

CARDINAL. What to do?

FERDINAND. Why, to make soft lint for his mother's wounds, when I have hewed her to pieces!

CARDINAL. Cursed creature.

FERDINAND. Talk to me quickly or my imagination will carry me to see her in the shameful act of sin.

CARDINAL. With whom?

FERDINAND. Happily with some strong-thighed bargeman, or one of the woodyard, or else some lovely squire that carries coals up to her privy lodgings.

CARDINAL. You fly beyond your reason.

FERDINAND. Go to, mistress! 'Tis not your whore's milk that shall quench my wild-fire but your whore's blood.

CARDINAL. How idly shows this rage.

FERDINAND. Have not you my palsy?

CARDINAL. Yes, but I can be angry without this rupture. Come, put yourself in tune.

FERDINAND. I could kill her now in you, or in myself, for I do think it is some sin in us heaven doth revenge by her.

CARDINAL. Are you stark mad?

FERDINAND. I would have their bodies burnt in a coal-pit, or dip the sheets they lie in in pitch or sulphur, wrap them in it, and then light them like a match; or else to boil their bastard to a cullis and give it his lecherous father to renew the sin of his back!

CARDINAL. I'll leave you.

FERDINAND. Nay, I have done. In, in; I'll go sleep. Till I know who leaps my sister, I'll not stir. That known, I'll find scorpions to string my whips, and fix her in a general eclipse.

[Exeunt]

Act III (about a year later)

Act III, scene 1

[Enter ANTONIO and DELIA. ANTONIO is now more expensively dressed]

ANTONIO. Our noble friend, my most beloved Delia! You have been a stranger long at court.

DELIA. How fares your noble duchess?

ANTONIO. Right fortunately well, since you last saw her she hath had two children more, a son and daughter.

DELIA. Methinks 'twas yesterday. Pray, sir, tell me, hath not this news arrived yet to the ear of the Lord Cardinal?

ANTONIO. I fear it hath and the Lord Ferdinand doth bear himself right dangerously.

DELIA. What say the common people?

ANTONIO. The common rabble do directly say she is a strumpet.

DELIA. And your graver heads, what censure they?

ANTONIO. They do observe I grow to infinite purchase the left hand way, and all suppose the duchess would amend it if she could. For other obligation of love or marriage between her and me they never dream of.

[Enter FERDINAND, BOSOLA, DUCHESS and CARIOLA]

FERDINAND. I am to bespeak a husband for you.

DUCHESS. For me, sir? Pray, who is it?

FERDINAND. The great Count Malateste.

DUCHESS. Fie upon him! A count? He's a mere stick of sugar-candy, you may look quite through him. When I choose a husband, I will marry for your honour.

FERDINAND. You shall do well in't. How is't, worthy Antonio?

DUCHESS. But, sir, I am to have private conference with you about a scandalous report is spread touching mine honour.

FERDINAND. Let me be ever deaf to it. Go, be safe in your own innocence.

DUCHESS. O blessed comfort. This deadly air is purged.

[The DUCHESS leaves with CARIOLA. FERDINAND dismisses ANTONIO and DELIA who then leave too.]

FERDINAND. Now, Bosola, how thrives our intelligence?

BOSOLA. Sir, uncertainly. 'Tis rumoured she hath had three bastards, but by whom, we may go read in the stars.

FERDINAND. Why, some hold opinion all things are written there.

BOSOLA. Yes, if we could find spectacles to read them. I do suspect there hath been some sorcery used on the duchess.

FERDINAND. Sorcery? To what purpose?

BOSOLA. To make her dote on some desertless fellow she shames to acknowledge.

FERDINAND. Away, these are mere gulleries invented by some cheating mountebanks to abuse us. The witchcraft lies in her rank blood. This night I will force confession from her. You told me you had got a false key into her bed-chamber.

BOSOLA. I have. What do you intend to do?

FERDINAND. Can you guess?

BOSOLA. No.

FERDINAND. Do not ask, then. Give me thy hand; I thank thee. Farewell.

[Exeunt FERDINAND and BOSOLA.]

Act III, scene 2

[Enter DUCHESS, ANTONIO, and CARIOLA. The DUCHESS is getting undressed ready for bed.]

DUCHESS. *[to CARIOLA]* Bring me the glass. *[CARIOLA gives her a mirror. To ANTONIO]* You get no lodging here to-night, my lord.

ANTONIO. Indeed, I must persuade one.

DUCHESS. Very good: I hope in time 'twill grow into a custom, that noblemen shall come with cap and knee to purchase a night's lodging of their wives.

ANTONIO. I must lie here.

DUCHESS. Must? You are a lord of misrule.

ANTONIO. Indeed, my rule is only in the night.

DUCHESS. To what use will you put me?

ANTONIO. We'll sleep together.

DUCHESS. Alas, what pleasure can two lovers find in sleep?

CARIOLA. My lord, I lie with her often and I know she'll much disquiet you...

ANTONIO. See? You are complained of.

CARIOLA. ...for she is the sprawlingest bedfellow.

ANTONIO. I shall like her the better for that.

CARIOLA. Sir, shall I ask you a question?

ANTONIO. I pray thee, Cariola.

CARIOLA. Wherefore still, when you lie with my lady, do you rise so early?

ANTONIO. Labouring men count the clock oftenest, Cariola, and are glad when their task is ended.

DUCHESS. I'll stop your mouth. [*Kisses him.*]

ANTONIO. Nay, that's but one. Venus had two soft doves to draw her chariot, I must have another. [*They kiss again.*] When wilt thou marry, Cariola?

CARIOLA. Never, my lord.

ANTONIO. O, fie upon this single life! Forgo it.

CARIOLA. I pray you, tell me, if there were proposed me, wisdom, riches, and beauty, in three several young men, which should I choose?

ANTONIO. 'Tis a hard question. This was Paris' case and he was blind in it for how could he judge right having three amorous goddesses in view, and they stark naked? Now I look on both your faces so well formed, it puts me in mind of a question I would ask.

CARIOLA. What is it?

ANTONIO. I do wonder why hard-favoured ladies, for the most part, keep worse-favoured waiting-women to attend them, and cannot endure fair ones.

DUCHESS. O, that's soon answered. Did you ever in your life know an ill painter desire to have his dwelling next door to the shop of an excellent picture-maker? 'Twould disgrace his face-making, and undo him. I prithee, when were we so merry? My hair tangles.

ANTONIO. [*aside to CARIOLA*] Pray thee, Cariola, let's steal forth the room and let her talk to herself, I love to see her angry. Softly, Cariola.

[Exeunt ANTONIO and CARIOLA with the DUCHESS's clothes while she brushes her hair.]

DUCHESS. Doth not the colour of my hair begin to change? When I wax gray, I shall have all the court powder their hair with arras to be like me.

[Enter FERDINAND, unseen by the DUCHESS]

DUCHESS. [thinking she's still talking to ANTONIO] Methinks my brother's presence, being now in court, should make you keep your own bed, but you'll say love mixed with fear is sweetest. I'll assure you, you shall get no more children 'till my brothers consent to be your gossips. Have you lost your tongue? [she turns and sees FERDINAND with his dagger drawn] 'Tis welcome: for know, whether I am doomed to live or die, I can do both like a prince.

FERDINAND. Die, then, quickly! Virtue, where art thou hid? What hideous thing is it that doth eclipse thee?

DUCHESS. Pray, sir, hear me.

FERDINAND. Do not speak.

DUCHESS. I am married.

FERDINAND. So!

DUCHESS. Happily, not to your liking: but for that, alas, your shears do come untimely now to clip the bird's wings that's already flown. Will you see my husband?

FERDINAND. Prithee peace! *[aloud, for ANTONIO to hear]* Whate'er thou art that hast enjoyed my sister, for I am sure thou hearest me, for thine own sake let me not know thee! I came hither prepared to work thy discovery, yet am now persuaded it would beget such violent effects as would damn us both. *[gives his dagger to the DUCHESS]* And for thee, vile woman, if thou do love him, cut out thine own tongue lest it betray him.

DUCHESS. Why might not I marry?

FERDINAND. Thou art undone, and thou hast taken the massy sheet of lead that hid thy husband's bones and wrapped it about my heart.

DUCHESS. You are in this too strict, my reputation is safe.

FERDINAND. Dost thou know what reputation is? You have shook hands with reputation and made him invisible. Fare you well: I will never see you more.

DUCHESS. Why should only I, of all the other princes of the world, be cased up like a holy relic? I have youth and a little beauty.

FERDINAND. I will never see thee more.

[Exit FERDINAND. Re-enter ANTONIO and CARIOLA]

DUCHESS. You saw this apparition?

ANTONIO. Yes, we are betrayed. How came he hither?

DUCHESS. That gallery gave him entrance.

ANTONIO. *[seeing the dagger]* What means this?

DUCHESS. He left this with me.

ANTONIO. And it seems did wish you would use it on yourself.

DUCHESS. His action seemed to intend so much.

[Knocking at the door. CARIOLA goes to the door]

ANTONIO. How now! Who knocks? More earthquakes?

DUCHESS. I stand as if a mine beneath my feet were ready to be blown up.

CARIOLA. 'Tis Bosola.

DUCHESS. *[to ANTONIO]* Away! You must part hence.

[ANTONIO starts to leave but is prevented by BOSOLA coming in.]

BOSOLA. The duke, your brother, hath rid post to Rome.

DUCHESS. So late?

BOSOLA. He told me you were undone.

DUCHESS. Indeed, I am very near it. *[aside to ANTONIO]* I must now accuse you of a feigned crime to shield our honours.

BOSOLA. What's the matter?

DUCHESS. *[aloud to BOSOLA]* Antonio, the master of our household, hath dealt falsely with me in his accounts. Call up our officers.

ANTONIO. *[playing along with the deception]* Will your grace hear me?

DUCHESS. I have got well by you; you have yielded me a million of loss and I am like to inherit the people's curses for your stewardship. *[to BOSOLA, indicating ANTONIO]* I would have this man be an example to you.

ANTONIO. O, the inconstant and rotten ground of service!

DUCHESS. *[aside to ANTONIO]* You must fly to Ancona. Hire a house there; I'll send after you my treasure and my jewels. *[aloud]* We do confiscate, towards the satisfying of your accounts, all that you have.

ANTONIO. I am all yours; and 'tis very fit all mine should be so. *[to BOSOLA]* You may see what it is to serve a prince with body and soul.

[Exit ANTONIO.]

DUCHESS. I would know what are your opinions of this Antonio.

BOSOLA. Alas, poor gentleman!

DUCHESS. Poor? he hath amply filled his coffers.

BOSOLA. Sure, he was too honest. He was an excellent courtier and most faithful; both his virtue and form deserved a far better fortune.

DUCHESS. But he was basely descended.

BOSOLA. Will you rather examine men's pedigrees than virtues? I would sooner swim to the Bermudas on two politicians' rotten bladders tied together than depend on so changeable a prince's favour. Fare thee well, Antonio, it cannot be said yet that any ill happened unto thee, considering thy fall was accompanied with virtue.

DUCHESS. O, you render me excellent music!

BOSOLA. Say you?

DUCHESS. This good one that you speak of is my husband.

BOSOLA. Do I not dream? Is't possible?

DUCHESS. I have had three children by him.

BOSOLA. Fortunate lady.

DUCHESS. As I taste comfort in this friendly speech, so would I find concealment. You shall take charge of all my coin and jewels and follow him to Ancona.

BOSOLA. So.

DUCHESS. Whither, within few days, I mean to follow thee.

BOSOLA. I would wish your grace to feign a pilgrimage to our Lady of Loretto, scarce seven leagues from fair Ancona; so may you depart your country with

more honour, and your flight will seem a princely progress, retaining your usual train about you.

DUCHESS. Sir, your direction shall lead me by the hand.

CARIOLA. In my opinion she were better progress to the baths at Lucca or go visit the spa in Germany for I do not like this jesting with religion, this feigned pilgrimage.

DUCHESS. Thou art a superstitious fool, prepare us instantly for our departure.

[Exit DUCHESS and CARIOLA.]

BOSOLA. A politician is the devil's quilted anvil: he fashions all sins on him, and the blows are never heard; he may work in a lady's chamber, as here for proof. What rests but I reveal all to my lord?

[Enter CARDINAL and FERDINAND.]

BOSOLA. Now, for this act I am certain to be raised, and men that paint weeds to the life are praised.

Act III, scene 3

CARDINAL. Doth she make religion her riding-hood to keep her from the sun and tempest?

FERDINAND. That damns her. Methinks her fault and beauty, blended together, show like leprosy; the whiter, the fouler. I make it a question whether her beggarly brats were ever christened.

CARDINAL. I will instantly solicit the state of Ancona to have them banished.

FERDINAND. You are for Loretto? Fare you well, write to the Duke of Malfi, my young nephew she had by her first husband, and acquaint him with his mother's honesty.

BOSOLA. I will.

FERDINAND. Antonio! A slave that only smelled of ink and counters and never in his life looked like a gentleman. Go draw out the guard and meet me at the footbridge.

[Exeunt.]

Act III, scene 4.

[DUCHESS, ANTONIO and CARIOLA enter wearing coats and CARIOLA carries two babies]

DUCHESS. Banished Ancona!

ANTONIO. Yes, you see what power lightens in great men's breath.

DUCHESS. And is all our train shrunk to this poor remainder?

ANTONIO. From decayed fortunes every flatterer shrinks, men cease to build where the foundation sinks.

DUCHESS. I had a very strange dream to-night. Methought I wore my coronet of state and on a sudden all the diamonds were changed to pearls.

ANTONIO. My interpretation is you'll weep shortly, for to me the pearls do signify your tears.

DUCHESS. The birds that live in the field live happier than we for they may choose their mates and carol their sweet pleasures to the spring.

[BOSOLA enters with a letter]

BOSOLA. You are happily overtaken. *[gives the letter to the DUCHESS]*.

DUCHESS. From my brother?

BOSOLA. Yes, from the Lord Ferdinand, your brother, all love and safety.

DUCHESS. *[Reads.]* 'Send Antonio to me; I want his head in a business.'
[hands the letter to ANTONIO]. He doth not want your counsel, but your head.

ANTONIO. *[reads]* 'I stand engaged for your husband for several debts at Naples. Let not that trouble him, I had rather have his heart than his money'. And I believe so too. *[to BOSOLA]* I will not come.

BOSOLA. This proclaims your breeding, every small thing draws a base mind to fear. Fare you well, sir; you shall shortly hear from us.

[Exit BOSOLA.]

DUCHESS. I suspect some ambush, fly towards Milan.

ANTONIO. You counsel safely.

DUCHESS. I know not which is best, to see you dead, or part with you.

ANTONIO. Do not weep, heaven fashioned us of nothing and we strive to bring ourselves to nothing. Farewell, Cariola, and thy sweet armful. If I do never see thee more, be a good mother to your little ones and save them from the tiger,

fare you well.

DUCHESS. Let me look upon you once more, for that speech came from a dying father. *[they kiss]* Your kiss is colder than that I have seen an holy anchorite give to a dead man's skull.

ANTONIO. Fare you well.

[Exit ANTONIO.]

CARIOLA. *[sees BOSOLA and the Guards]* Look, madam!

[Re-enter BOSOLA with guards (DELIA and JULIA, doubled)]

DUCHESS. They are very welcome, I would have my ruin be sudden. I am your adventure, am I not?

GUARD 1. You are. You must see your husband no more.

DUCHESS. Come, to what prison?

GUARD 1. To none.

DUCHESS. Whither, then?

GUARD 1. To your palace.

GUARD 2. Your brothers mean you safety and pity.

DUCHESS. Pity? With such a 'pity' men preserve alive pheasants and quails when they are not fat enough to be eaten.

GUARD 2. These are your children?

DUCHESS. Yes.

GUARD 2. Can they prattle?

DUCHESS. No, but I intend, since they were born accursed, curses shall be their first language.

BOSOLA. Fie, madam! Forget this base, low fellow...

DUCHESS. *[flies at him, furious]* Were I a man I'd beat that counterfeit face into thy other!

BOSOLA. *[fighting her off, she is restrained by the guards]* ...one of no birth.

DUCHESS. I prithee who is greatest? Can you tell? *[calm again]* Come, whither you please. I am armed 'gainst misery, bent to all sways of the

oppressor's will. There's no deep valley but near some great hill.

[Exeunt.]

INTERVAL

Act IV.

Act IV, scene 1 (a few days later)

[The tableau of Antonio and his children has been set during the interval but is concealed. Enter DUCHESS, CARIOLA and BOSOLA. We can see that the DUCHESS has been tortured and CARIOLA is nursing her. Enter FERDINAND with a fake arm at the other side of the stage, BOSOLA goes to him.]

FERDINAND. How doth our sister bear herself in her imprisonment?

BOSOLA. Nobly. She's sad as one long used to it and she seems rather to welcome the end of misery than shun it.

FERDINAND. Her melancholy seems to be fortified with a strange disdain.

BOSOLA. 'Tis so.

FERDINAND. Curse upon her! Inform her what I told you.

[FERDINAND stays on while BOSOLA returns to the DUCHESS.]

BOSOLA. All comfort to your grace.

DUCHESS. I will have none.

BOSOLA. The Lord Ferdinand is come to visit you and sends you word, 'cause once he rashly made a solemn vow never to see you more, he comes in the night and prays you gently neither torch nor taper shine in your chamber.

DUCHESS. At his pleasure. *[to CARIOLA]* Take hence the lights.

[Exit CARIOLA. The lights are dimmed. BOSOLA stays on. FERDINAND approaches.]

FERDINAND. Where are you?

DUCHESS. Here, sir.

FERDINAND. This darkness suits you. It had been well could you have lived thus always for indeed you were too much in the light.

DUCHESS. I would ask you pardon.

FERDINAND. You have it. I come to seal my peace with you. Here's a hand to which you have vowed much love; the ring upon it you gave.

[Gives her a dead man's hand.]

DUCHESS. *[believing FERDINAND is offering his own hand]* I affectionately kiss it.

FERDINAND. Pray, do. I will leave this ring with you for a love-token, and the hand as sure as the ring, and do not doubt but you shall have the heart too.

DUCHESS. You are very cold, I fear you are not well after your travel.
[discovers she is kissing a dead, severed hand] Ha! Lights! O, horrible!

FERDINAND. Let her have lights enough!

[Exit FERDINAND. The lights are restored and CARIOLA enters.]

DUCHESS. What witchcraft doth he practise, that he hath left a dead man's hand here?

[Here is discovered the artificial figures of ANTONIO and his children appearing as if they were dead.]

BOSOLA. Look you, here's the piece from which it was taken. Now you know they are dead you may wisely cease to grieve for that which cannot be recovered.

DUCHESS. Bind me to that lifeless trunk and let me freeze to death.

BOSOLA. Come, you must live.

DUCHESS. That's the greatest torture souls feel in hell, that they must live and cannot die.

BOSOLA. Remember you are a Christian.

DUCHESS. The church enjoins fasting: I'll starve myself to death.

BOSOLA. Leave this vain sorrow. Things being at the worst begin to mend.

DUCHESS. Who must despatch me? I account this world a tedious theatre for I do play a part in it 'gainst my will.

BOSOLA. Come, be of comfort. I pity you.

DUCHESS. Thou art a fool, then, to waste thy pity on a thing so wretched as cannot pity itself. I'll go pray; no, I'll go curse.

BOSOLA. Fie, lady.

DUCHESS. I am full of daggers, I long to bleed; it is some mercy when men kill with speed.

[the DUCHESS and CARIOLA withdraw but stay on. Re-enter FERDINAND]

FERDINAND. Excellent, as I would wish; she's plagued in art. These presentations are but framed in wax and she takes them for true substantial bodies.

BOSOLA. Why do you do this?

FERDINAND. To bring her to despair.

BOSOLA. Faith, end here and go no farther in your cruelty.

FERDINAND. Damn her! I will send her masques of common courtesans, have her meat served up by bawds and ruffians, and, 'cause she'll needs be mad, I am resolved to move forth the common hospital all the mad folk and place them near her lodging, there let them act their gambols to the full of the moon. If she can sleep the better for it, let her. Your work is almost ended.

BOSOLA. Must I see her again?

FERDINAND. Yes.

BOSOLA. Never.

FERDINAND. You must.

[Exit FERDINAND.]

BOSOLA. Never in my own shape, that's forfeited by this last cruel lie.

[Exit BOSOLA.]

Act IV, scene 2

[We hear the MADMEN off-stage (double CARDINAL, ANTONIO, JULIA, DELIA).]

DUCHESS. What hideous noise was that?

CARIOLA. 'Tis a wild consort of madmen, lady, which your tyrant brother hath placed about your lodging.

DUCHESS. Indeed, I thank him. Nothing but noise and folly can keep me in my right wits whereas reason and silence make me stark mad. Sit down, discourse to me some tragedy.

CARIOLA. 'Twill increase your melancholy.

DUCHESS. Thou art deceived, to hear of a greater grief would lessen mine. This is a prison?

CARIOLA. Yes, but you shall live to shake this durance off.

DUCHESS. Thou art a fool, the robin redbreast and the nightingale never live long in cages. Dost thou think we shall know one another in the next world?

CARIOLA. Yes, beyond question.

DUCHESS. O that it were possible we might but hold some two days' conference with the dead, from them I should learn somewhat I am sure I never shall know here. I'll tell thee a miracle; I am not mad yet, to my cause of sorrow. I am acquainted with sad misery as the tanned galley slave is with his oar, necessity makes me suffer constantly and custom makes it easy.

[BOSOLA enters in disguise carrying a bell. We hear more noise from the MADMEN outside as he comes in.]

DUCHESS. How now? What noise is that?

BOSOLA. Your brother hath intended you some sport. A great physician, when the Pope was sick of a deep melancholy, presented him with several sorts of madmen which wild object, being full of change and sport, forced him to laugh. The self-same cure the duke intends on you.

DUCHESS. Let them come in. Sit, Cariola. *[to BOSOLA]* Let them loose when you please for I am chained to endure all your tyranny.

MADMEN. *[This song is sung to a dismal kind of music.]*

O, let us howl some heavy note,
Some deadly dogged howl,
Sounding as from the threatening throat
Of beasts and fatal fowl!
As ravens, screech-owls, bulls, and bears,
We'll bell, and bawl our parts,
Till irksome noise have cloyed your ears
And corrosived your hearts.
At last, whenas our choir wants breath,
Our bodies being blest,
We 'll sing, like swans, to welcome death,
And die in love and rest.

[Here the dance, consisting of madmen, with music answerable thereunto. The MADMEN exit.]

DUCHESS. Are you mad too?

BOSOLA. I am come to make thy tomb.

DUCHESS. My tomb? Thou speak'st as if I lay upon my deathbed, gasping for breath. Dost thou perceive me sick?

BOSOLA. Yes, and the more dangerously, since thy sickness is insensible.

DUCHESS. Thou art not mad, sure. Dost know me?

BOSOLA. Yes.

DUCHESS. Who am I?

BOSOLA. Thou art a box of worm-seed, at best.

DUCHESS. Am not I thy duchess?

BOSOLA. Thou art some great woman, sure.

DUCHESS. I am Duchess of Malfi still.

BOSOLA. Glories, like glow-worms, afar off shine bright but, looked to near, have neither heat nor light.

DUCHESS. Thou art very plain.

BOSOLA. My trade is to flatter the dead, not the living; I am a tomb-maker.

DUCHESS. And thou comest to make my tomb?

BOSOLA. Yes.

DUCHESS. Let me know fully, therefore, the effect of this, thy dismal preparation.

BOSOLA. Now I shall.

[he rings the bell to summon two EXECUTIONERS, (double DELIA and JULIA) with a rope and a hood to cover her head.]

BOSOLA. Here is a present from your brothers.

DUCHESS. Let me see it.

[they show her the rope with which she is to be strangled]

CARIOLA. O my sweet lady!

DUCHESS. Peace, it affrights not me.

BOSOLA. I am the common bellman that usually is sent to condemned persons the night before they suffer.

DUCHESS. Thou said'st thou wast a tomb-maker.

BOSOLA. 'Twas to bring you by degrees to mortification.

[BOSOLA tolls the bell and recites the following as the EXECUTIONERS stand the DUCHESS up and prepare her for execution.]

BOSOLA. Hark now, everything is still,
The screech owl and the whistler shrill
Call upon our dame, aloud,
And bid her quickly don her shroud.
Strew your hair with powders sweet
Don clean linen, bathe your feet,
'Tis now full tide 'tween night and day
End your groan and come away.

CARIOLA. Hence, villains, tyrants, murderers! What will you do with my lady?
Call for help!

DUCHESS. To whom? To our next neighbours? They are mad-folks.

BOSOLA. *[to 1st EXECUTIONER]* Remove that noise.

DUCHESS. Farewell, Cariola.

CARIOLA. I will die with her.

DUCHESS. I pray thee, look thou giv'st my little boy some syrup for his cold,
and let the girl say her prayers ere she sleep.

[1st EXECUTIONER drags out CARIOLA.]

DUCHESS. Now what you please. What death?

BOSOLA. Strangling; here is your executioner.

DUCHESS. *[to the 2nd EXECUTIONER]* I forgive you. The apoplexy, catarrh,
or cough o' th' lungs would do as much as you do.

BOSOLA. Doth not death fright you?

DUCHESS. Who would be afraid of it, knowing to meet such excellent
company in the other world?

BOSOLA. Yet, methinks, the manner of your death should much afflict you.
This cord should terrify you.

DUCHESS. Not a whit. What would it pleasure me to have my throat cut with
diamonds? Or to be smothered with cassia? Or to be shot to death with
pearls? Tell my brothers that I perceive death the best gift they can give or I
can take.

SECOND EXECUTIONER. I am ready.

DUCHESS. Dispose my breath how please you but my body bestow upon my woman, will you?

SECOND EXECUTIONER. Yes.

DUCHESS. Pull, and pull strongly, for your able strength must pull down heaven upon me.

[the EXECUTIONER starts to put the hood over her head.]

DUCHESS. *[pushing the hood away]* Yet stay, heaven-gates are not so highly arched as princes' palaces; they that enter there must go upon their knees *[Kneels]*. Come, violent death, serve for mandragora to make me sleep. Go tell my brothers, when I am laid out, they then may feed in quiet.

[The EXECUTIONER puts the hood over her head and strangles her.]

BOSOLA. *[calls out to 1st EXECUTIONER, off-stage]* Where's the waiting-woman? Fetch her in. *[to 2nd EXECUTIONER]* Strangle the children.

[2nd EXECUTIONER exits. 1st EXECUTIONER brings CARIOLA back on]

BOSOLA. *[to CARIOLA]* Look you, there sleeps your mistress.

CARIOLA. O, you are damned perpetually for this! My turn is next, is it not so ordered?

BOSOLA. Yes, and I am glad you are so well prepared for it.

CARIOLA. You are deceived, sir, I am not prepared for it. I will not die, how have I offended?

BOSOLA. Come, despatch her. You kept her counsel; now you shall keep ours.

CARIOLA. I will not die, I must not; I am contracted to a young gentleman.

FIRST EXECUTIONER. *[indicating the rope]* Here's your wedding-ring.

CARIOLA. Let me but speak with the duke. I'll discover treason to his person.

BOSOLA. Delays - throttle her.

FIRST EXECUTIONER. She bites and scratches.

CARIOLA. If you kill me now I am damned; I have not been at confession this two years. I am quick with child.

BOSOLA. Why, then, your credit's saved.

[1st EXECUTIONER strangles Cariola. Enter FERDINAND]

FERDINAND. Is she dead?

BOSOLA. She is what you'd have her. *[sends off the 1st EXECUTIONER and pulls the hood off the DUCHESS's head.]* Fix your eye here. Do you not weep? Other sins only speak, murder shrieks out. The element of water moistens the earth but blood flies upwards and bedews the heavens.

FERDINAND. Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle. She died young. She and I were twins and should I die this instant, I had lived her time to a minute. Let me see her face again. Why didst thou not pity her? What an excellent honest man mightst thou have been if thou hadst borne her to some sanctuary. I bade thee, when I was distracted of my wits, go kill my dearest friend, and thou hast done it. What was the meanness of her match to me? Only, I must confess, I had a hope, had she continued widow, to have gained an infinite mass of treasure by her death. That was the main cause - her marriage - that drew a stream of gall quite through my heart. For thee; I hate thee for it, and for my sake say thou hast done much ill, well.

BOSOLA. Let me quicken your memory, for I perceive you are falling into ingratitude. I challenge the reward due to my service.

FERDINAND. I'll tell thee what I'll give thee.

BOSOLA. Do.

FERDINAND. I'll give thee a pardon for this murder.

BOSOLA. Ha!

FERDINAND. Yes, and 'tis the largest bounty I can study to do thee. By what authority didst thou execute this bloody sentence?

BOSOLA. By yours.

FERDINAND. Mine? Was I her judge? Did any ceremonial form of law doom her to not-being? Like a bloody fool thou hast forfeited thy life and thou shalt die for it.

BOSOLA. Who shall dare to reveal this?

FERDINAND. I'll tell thee. The wolf shall find her grave and scrape it up, not to devour the corpse, but to discover the horrid murder.

BOSOLA. You, not I, shall quake for it.

FERDINAND. Leave me.

BOSOLA. I will first receive my pension.

FERDINAND. You are a villain.

BOSOLA. When your ingratitude is judge I am so.

FERDINAND. Never look upon me more.

BOSOLA. Why fare thee well. Your brother and yourself are worthy men, you have a pair of hearts are hollow graves, rotten and rotting others.

FERDINAND. Get thee into some unknown part of the world that I may never see thee.

BOSOLA. Let me know wherefore I should be thus neglected? Sir, I served your tyranny and, though I loathed the evil, yet I loved you that did counsel it and rather sought to appear a true servant than an honest man.

FERDINAND. I'll go hunt the badger by owl light, 'tis a deed of darkness.

[Exit FERDINAND. The DUCHESS starts to recover]

BOSOLA. He's much distracted. What would I do, were this to do again? She stirs; here's life. Return, fair soul, from darkness and lead mine out of this sensible hell. She's warm, she breathes. *[calls to off-stage.]* Who's there? Some cordial drink!

DUCHESS. Antonio?

BOSOLA. Yes, madam, he is living. The dead bodies you saw were but feigned statues.

DUCHESS. Mercy!

[the DUCHESS dies.]

BOSOLA. She's gone again: there the cords of life broke. *[weeps.]* This is manly sorrow. Where were these penitent fountains while she was living? They were frozen up. Here is a sight as direful to my soul as is the sword unto a wretch hath slain his father.

[Exit BOSOLA. The dead bodies of the DUCHESS and CARIOLA stand and go to the back of the stage where they continue to watch the action.]

Act V.

Act V, scene 1 *[Enter ANTONIO and DELIA]*

ANTONIO. What think you of my hope of reconciliation to the Aragonian brethren?

DELIA. I misdoubt it, for though they have sent you letters of safe conduct, they appear but nets to entrap you.

ANTONIO. You are still an heretic to any safety I can shape myself.

DELIA. Prince Ferdinand is sick, as they give out, of an apoplexy but some say 'tis a frenzy.

ANTONIO. What's his disease?

DELIA. They call it lycanthropia.

ANTONIO. What's that?

DELIA. In those that are possessed with it, there overflows such melancholy humour they imagine themselves to be transformed into wolves, steal forth to churchyards in the dead of night and dig dead bodies up. What course do you mean to take?

ANTONIO. This night I have got private access to the Cardinal's chamber and intend to visit him about the mid of night. It may be that the sudden apprehension of danger may draw the poison out of him and work a friendly reconciliation. If it fail, it shall rid me of this infamous calling, for better fall once than be ever falling.

DELIA. I'll second you in all danger.

ANTONIO. You are still my loved and best friend.

[Exeunt DELIA and ANTONIO.]

Act V, scene 2

[Enter FERDINAND, mad and believing he is a wolf, followed by the CARDINAL and BOSOLA]

FERDINAND. Leave me.

BOSOLA. Why doth your lordship love this solitariness?

FERDINAND. Eagles commonly fly alone, they are crows, daws and starlings that flock together. Look, what's that follows me?

BOSOLA. Nothing, my lord.

FERDINAND. Yes.

CARDINAL. 'Tis your shadow.

FERDINAND. Stay it; let it not haunt me.

CARDINAL. Impossible, if you move, and the sun shine.

FERDINAND. I will throttle it.

[Throws himself down on his shadow.]

BOSOLA. O, my lord, you are angry with nothing.

FERDINAND. You are a fool: how is it possible I should catch my shadow unless I fall upon it?

BOSOLA. Rise, good my lord.

FERDINAND. *[sits on the floor]* I am studying the art of patience.

BOSOLA. 'Tis a noble virtue.

FERDINAND. To drive six snails before me, from this town to Moscow; neither use goad nor whip to them but let them take their own time and I'll crawl after.

CARDINAL. Force him up.

[BOSOLA raises him.]

FERDINAND. Use me well, you were best. What I have done, I have done, I'll confess nothing.

BOSOLA. Are you mad, my lord? Are you out of your princely wits?

FERDINAND. Hence, hence, you are all of you like beasts for sacrifice; there's nothing left of you but tongue and belly, flattery and lechery!

[FERDINAND runs off.]

BOSOLA. Mercy upon me, what a fatal judgement hath fallen upon this Ferdinand. Knows your grace what accident hath brought unto the prince this strange distraction?

CARDINAL. *[shakes his head]* He hath grown worse and worse and I much fear he cannot live.

BOSOLA. Sir, I would speak with you.

CARDINAL. *[Aside.]* I must feign somewhat. This fellow must not know by any means I had intelligence in our duchess' death. *[to BOSOLA]* Now, sir, how fares our sister? Why do you look so wildly? O, the fortune of your master here the prince dejects you; but be you of happy comfort, If you'll do one thing for me I'll entreat, though he had a cold tombstone over his bones, I'll make you what you would be.

BOSOLA. Anything, give it me in a breath, and let me fly to it.

[Enter JULIA]

JULIA. Sir, will you come into supper?

CARDINAL. I am busy, leave me.

JULIA. *[Aside, speaking of BOSOLA]* What an excellent shape hath that fellow!

[Exit JULIA.]

CARDINAL. 'Tis thus. Antonio lurks here; inquire him out and kill him. While he lives, our sister cannot marry; and I have thought of an excellent match for her. Do this and style me thy advancement.

BOSOLA. By what means shall I find him out?

CARDINAL. There is a woman called Delia that hath been long approved his loyal friend. Set eye upon her, follow her to mass; may be Antonio will accompany her. Or else go inquire out her confessor and see if you can bribe him to reveal it. There are a thousand ways a man might find to trace him.

BOSOLA. I'll not freeze in the business. I would see that wretched thing, Antonio, above all sights in the world.

CARDINAL. Do, and be happy.

[Exit CARDINAL.]

BOSOLA. This fellow doth breed basilisks in his eyes. He's nothing else but murder, yet he seems not to have notice of the duchess' death. 'Tis his cunning, I must follow his example; there cannot be a surer way to trace than that of an old fox.

[Re-enter JULIA, with a pistol]

JULIA. *[aiming the pistol at BOSOLA]* So, sir, you are well met.

BOSOLA. How now? *[BOSOLA looks to escape.]*

JULIA. Nay, the doors are fast enough. Now, sir, I will make you confess your treachery.

BOSOLA. Treachery?

JULIA. Yes, confess to me which of my women 'twas you hired to put love-powder into my drink?

BOSOLA. Love-powder?

JULIA. Yes, why should I fall in love with such a face else? I have already suffered for thee so much pain, the only remedy to do me good is to kill my longing.

BOSOLA. Excellent lady, you have a pretty way to discover your longing. Come, I'll disarm you, and arm you thus [*they kiss*]. Yet this is wondrous strange.

JULIA. Now you'll say I am wanton. This nice modesty in ladies is but a troublesome familiar that haunts them.

BOSOLA. Know you me, I am a blunt soldier.

JULIA. The better. Sure, there wants fire where there are no lively sparks of roughness.

BOSOLA. And I want compliment.

JULIA. Why, ignorance in courtship cannot make you do amiss if you have a heart to do well.

BOSOLA. You are very fair.

JULIA. Nay, if you lay beauty to my charge, I must plead unguilty.

BOSOLA. [*Aside*] I have it, I will work upon this creature. [*to JULIA*] Let us grow most amorously familiar [*they kiss*]. If the great cardinal now should see me thus, would he not count me a villain?

JULIA. No. He might count me a wanton, not lay a scruple of offence on you, for if I see and steal a diamond the fault is not in the stone but in me the thief that purloins it. Had you been in the street under my chamber window, even there I should have courted you.

BOSOLA. O, you are an excellent lady!

JULIA. Bid me do somewhat for you presently to express I love you.

BOSOLA. I will, and if you love me, fail not to effect it. The cardinal is grown wondrous melancholy; demand the cause, let him not put you off with feigned excuse.

JULIA. Why would you know this?

BOSOLA. I have depended on him and I hear that he is fallen in some disgrace. If he be, like the mice that forsake falling houses, I would shift to other dependance. Will you do this?

JULIA. Cunningly.

BOSOLA. To-morrow I'll expect the intelligence.

CARDINAL. [off-stage] Let none, upon your lives, have conference with the Lord Ferdinand unless I know it.

JULIA. To-morrow? Get you into my cabinet, you shall have it with you. Go, get you in, you shall see me wind my tongue about his heart like a skein of silk.

[BOSOLA hides. Enter CARDINAL with a Bible.]

CARDINAL. *[sees Julia]* Yond's my lingering consumption. I am weary of her and by any means would be quit of.

JULIA. How now, my lord. What ails you?

CARDINAL. Nothing.

JULIA. O, you are much altered. Come, what's the matter?

CARDINAL. I may not tell you.

JULIA. Are you so far in love with sorrow you cannot part with part of it? Or think you I cannot love your grace when you are sad as well as merry?

CARDINAL. Satisfy thy longing, the only way to make thee keep my counsel is not to tell thee.

JULIA. Tell your echo this and not me; for if that you be true unto yourself, I'll know.

CARDINAL. Very well: imagine I have committed some secret deed which I desire the world may never hear of.

JULIA. Therefore may not I know it? I beseech you.

CARDINAL. You'll repent it.

JULIA. Never.

CARDINAL. It hurries thee to ruin: I'll not tell thee. 'Tis a secret that, like a lingering poison, may chance lie spread in thy veins and kill thee seven years hence.

JULIA. Now you dally with me.

CARDINAL. No more, thou shalt know it. By my appointment the great Duchess of Malfi and two of her young children, four nights since, were strangled.

JULIA. *[shocked]* O heaven! Sir, what have you done?

CARDINAL. Think you your bosom will be a grave, dark and obscure enough for such a secret?

JULIA. You have undone yourself, sir.

CARDINAL. Why?

JULIA. It lies not in me to conceal it.

CARDINAL. No? Come, I will swear you to it upon this book.

JULIA. Most religiously.

CARDINAL. Kiss it.

[She kisses the Bible.]

CARDINAL. Now you shall never utter it; thy curiosity hath undone thee; thou art poisoned with that book. Because I knew thou couldst not keep my counsel I have bound thee to it by death.

[JULIA is dying from the poison on the Bible. BOSOLA reveals himself.]

BOSOLA. For pity's sake, hold!

CARDINAL. Bosola?

JULIA. I betrayed your counsel to that fellow. He over-heard it; that was the cause I said it lay not in me to conceal it.

BOSOLA. Foolish woman, couldst not thou have poisoned him?

JULIA. 'Tis weakness too much to think what should have been done. I go, I know not whither. *[JULIA dies.]*

CARDINAL. Wherefore com'st thou hither?

BOSOLA. That I might find a great man like yourself, not out of his wits as the Lord Ferdinand, to remember my service.

CARDINAL. I'll have thee hewed in pieces. Who placed thee here?

BOSOLA. Her lust, as she intended.

CARDINAL. Very well, now you know me for your fellow-murderer. There is a fortune attends thee. I have honours in store for thee.

BOSOLA. There are many ways that conduct to seeming honour, and some of them very dirty ones.

CARDINAL. Wilt thou kill Antonio?

BOSOLA. Yes.

CARDINAL. I will allow thee some dozen of attendants to aid thee in the murder.

BOSOLA. O, by no means. Let me have no train when I go to shed blood, lest it make me have a greater when I ride to the gallows.

CARDINAL. I'll give out she died of the plague, 'twill breed the less enquiry after her death. *[Gives BOSOLA a key]* Come to me after midnight, there is the master key of our lodgings. By that you may conceive what trust I plant in you.

BOSOLA. You shall find me ready.

[Exit CARDINAL.]

BOSOLA. Poor Antonio, I'll seek thee out, and all my care shall be to put thee into safety from the reach of these most cruel biters that have got some of thy blood already.

[The DUCHESS rises and appears before him.]

BOSOLA. Still methinks the duchess haunts me: there, there! *[She is gone again.]* 'Tis nothing but my melancholy. O penitence, let me truly taste thy cup that throws men down, only to raise them up.

[Exit BOSOLA. The dead body of JULIA rises and joins the DUCHESS and CARIOLA at the back of the stage.]

Act V, scene 3

[Enter ANTONIO and DELIA. The echo from the duchess's grave is spoken by the DUCHESS, CARIOLA and JULIA]

DELIA. Yond's the cardinal's window. This fortification grew from the ruins of an ancient abbey and to yond side of the river lies a wall which, in my opinion, gives the best echo that you ever heard, so hollow and so dismal, and so plain in the distinction of our words, that many have supposed it is a spirit that answers.

ANTONIO. I do love these ancient ruins, we never tread upon them but we set our foot upon some reverend history. But all things have their end; churches and cities, which have diseases like to men, must have like death that we have.

ECHO. *[in the voice of the DUCHESS]* Like death that we have.

DELIA. Now the echo hath caught you.

ANTONIO. It groaned methought, and gave a very deadly accent.

ECHO. *[CARIOLA]* Deadly accent.

DELIA. I told you 'twas a pretty one. You may make it a huntsman, or a falconer, a musician, or a thing of sorrow.

ECHO. *[in the voice of JULIA]* A thing of sorrow.

ANTONIO. Ay, sure, that suits it best.

ECHO. *[DUCHESS]* That suits it best.

ANTONIO. 'Tis very like my wife's voice.

ECHO. *[CARIOLA]* Ay, wife's voice.

DELIA. Come, let's walk further from it. I would not have you go to the cardinal's to-night: do not.

ECHO. *[in the voice of JULIA]* Do not.

DELIA. Be mindful of thy safety.

ECHO. *[DUCHESS]* Be mindful of thy safety.

ANTONIO. Necessity compels me, it's impossible to fly your fate.

ECHO. *[CARIOLA]* Fly your fate.

DELIA. Hark! the dead stones seem to have pity on you and give you good counsel.

ANTONIO. Echo, I will not talk with thee, for thou art a dead thing.

ECHO. *[JULIA]* Thou art a dead thing.

ANTONIO. My duchess is asleep now, and her little ones, I hope sweetly. O heaven, shall I never see her more?

ECHO. *[DUCHESS]* Never see her more.

ANTONIO. I marked not one repetition of the echo but that; and on the sudden a clear light presented me a face folded in sorrow.

DELIA. Your fancy merely.

ANTONIO. Come, I'll be out of this ague; for to live thus is not, indeed, to live. Lose all or nothing.

DELIA. Your own virtue save you. Fare you well.

[Exeunt DELIA and ANTONIO. The DUCHESS, CARIOLA and JULIA return upstage but stay on.]

Act V, scene 4

[Enter CARDINAL and BOSOLA separately.]

CARDINAL. 'Twas a foul storm tonight. O, my conscience! I would pray now but the devil takes away my heart for having any confidence in prayer. About this hour I appointed Bosola to come to my chamber. When he hath served my turn, he dies. *[CARDINAL kneels to pray.]*

BOSOLA. 'Twas the cardinal's voice; I heard him name Bosola and my death.

[Enter FERDINAND. BOSOLA conceals himself.]

FERDINAND. Strangling is a very quiet death.

BOSOLA. *[Aside.]* Nay, then, I see I must stand upon my guard.

FERDINAND. What say to that? Whisper softly: do you agree to it? So; it must be done in the dark. *[Exit FERDINAND.]*

BOSOLA. My death is plotted; here's the consequence of murder.

[Enter ANTONIO, he sees the CARDINAL at prayer.]

ANTONIO. Could I take him at his prayers, there were hope of pardon.

BOSOLA. Fall right, my sword! I'll not give thee so much leisure as to pray.

[BOSOLA stabs ANTONIO mistaking him for the CARDINAL.]

ANTONIO. I am gone.

BOSOLA. What art thou?

ANTONIO. A most wretched thing. Bosola!

BOSOLA. Antonio! The man I would have saved above mine own life! O good Antonio, I'll whisper one thing in thy dying ear shall make thy heart break quickly! Thy fair duchess and two sweet children...

ANTONIO. Their very names kindle a little life in me.

BOSOLA. ...are murdered.

ANTONIO. Some men have wished to die at the hearing of sad tidings; I am glad that I shall do it in sadness. I do not ask the process of my death, only commend me to Delia. *[ANTONIO dies.]*

BOSOLA. Break, heart! I have this cardinal in the forge already, now I'll bring him to the hammer.

CARDINAL. I am puzzled in a question about hell. They say in hell there's one material fire and yet it shall not burn all men alike. How tedious is a guilty conscience. When I look into the fish-ponds in my garden, methinks I see a thing, armed with a rake, that seems to strike at me.

[sees BOSOLA]

CARDINAL. Now! Art thou come? Thou look'st ghastly, There sits in thy face some great determination mixed with some fear.

BOSOLA. Thus it lightens into action. I am come to kill thee.

CARDINAL. Help! Our guard!

BOSOLA. Thou art deceived, they are out of thy howling.

CARDINAL. Hold, and I will faithfully divide revenues with thee.

BOSOLA. Thy prayers and proffers are both unseasonable.

CARDINAL. Raise the watch! We are betrayed! What cause hast thou to pursue my life?

BOSOLA. Look there.

CARDINAL. Antonio!

BOSOLA. Slain by my hand unwittingly. Pray, and be sudden; when thou kill'd'st thy sister thou took'st from Justice her most equal balance and left naught but her sword.

CARDINAL. *[on his knees, begging]* O, mercy!

BOSOLA. Now it seems thy greatness was only outward for thou fallest faster of thyself than calamity can drive thee. I'll not waste longer time; there!

[BOSOLA stabs the CARDINAL.]

CARDINAL. Thou hast hurt me.

BOSOLA. Again! *[stabs him again]*

CARDINAL. Help, help, help! I am slain!

[Enter FERDINAND, as if on a battlefield]

FERDINAND. The alarm! Give me a fresh horse, rally the vaunt-guard, or the day is lost. *[challenges the CARDINAL.]* Yield, yield!

CARDINAL. Help me; I am your brother!

FERDINAND. The devil! My brother fight upon the adverse party! There flies your ransom.

[FERDINAND stabs the CARDINAL. He then notices BOSOLA and stabs him too.]

CARDINAL. O justice! I suffer now for what hath former been, sorrow is held the eldest child of sin.

FERDINAND. *[addressing BOSOLA and the CARDINAL, both wounded]* Now you're brave fellows. You both died in the field. The pain's nothing.

BOSOLA. *[stabs FERDINAND]* Now my revenge is perfect. Sink, thou main cause of my undoing! The last part of my life hath done me best service.

FERDINAND. Give me some wet hay, I am broken-winded.

BOSOLA. He seems to come to himself, now he's so near the bottom.

FERDINAND. *[entirely lucid in his final moments]* My sister, O my sister! There's the cause on't. Whether we fall by ambition, blood, or lust, like diamonds, we are cut with our own dust. *[FERDINAND dies.]*

CARDINAL. *[to BOSOLA]* Thou hast thy payment too.

BOSOLA. Yes, I hold my weary soul in my teeth, 'tis ready to part from me. I do glory that thou, which stood'st like a huge pyramid begun upon a large and ample base, shalt end in a little point, a kind of nothing.

[Enter DELIA]

DELIA. *[to ANTONIO]* How now, my lord! *[discovers he is dead, then to BOSOLA]* O sad disaster. How comes this?

BOSOLA. Revenge for the Duchess of Malfi murdered by the Aragonian brethren, for Antonio slain by this hand, for lustful Julia poisoned by this man and lastly for myself, that was an actor in the main of all, much 'gainst mine own good nature, yet in the end, neglected.

CARDINAL. Look to my brother, he gave us these large wounds, as we were struggling here. And now, I pray, let me be laid by and never thought of.

[CARDINAL dies.]

DELIA. How came Antonio by his death?

BOSOLA. In a mist, I know not how. Such a mistake as I have often seen in a play. O, I am gone. We are only like walls or vaulted graves that, ruined, yields no echo. Fare you well. It may be pain but no harm to me to die in so good a quarrel. O, this gloomy world! In what a shadow or deep pit of darkness doth womanish and fearful mankind live! Let worthy minds ne'er stagger in distrust to suffer death or shame for what is just; mine is another voyage.

[BOSOLA dies. The spirits of the Duchess, Cariola and Julia come forward to join Delia]

DELIA. These wretched eminent things leave no more fame behind them than should one fall in a frost, and leave his print in snow; as soon as the sun shines, it ever melts both form and matter. Integrity of life is fame's best friend, which nobly, beyond death, shall crown the end.

THE END