

by John Webster



THE DUCHESS OF MALFI by John Webster

The Duchess of Malfi

Cariola, her waiting woman

Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, her twin brother

The Cardinal of Aragon, their elder brother

Daniel de Bosola, provisor of horse to Duchess, retained as a spy by Ferdinand Antonio Bologna, steward of the household to the Duchess, later her husband

Delio, his friend

Julia, the Cardinal's mistress

Castruccio, her aged husband

Old Lady, a midwife

Marquis of Pescara, a soldier

Malateste, a Count

Silvio, a Lord

Grisolan, a Lord

A Doctor

Two Pilgrims

Three young children

Eight Madmen – an astrologer, a broker, a doctor, a farmer, a gentleman usher, a

lawyer, a priest, a tailor

Officers

Executioners

Attendants

Servants

1.1

Enter ANTONIO and DELIO

DELIO 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: In seeking to reduce both state and people To a fixed order, their judicious king Begins at home: guits first his royal palace Of flattering sycophants, of dissolute And infamous persons, which he sweetly terms His Master's masterpiece, the work of heaven, Considering duly that a prince's court Is like a common fountain, whence should flow Pure silver drops in general; but if't chance Some cursed example poison't near the head. Death and diseases through the whole land spread. And what is't makes this blessed government But a most provident Council, who dare freely Inform him the corruption of the times? Though some o' th' court hold it presumption To instruct princes what they ought to do, It is a noble duty to inform them What they ought to foresee.

Enter BOSOLA

Here comes Bosola,
The only court-gall; yet I observe his railing
Is not for simple love of piety.
Indeed, he rails at those things which he wants,
Would be as lecherous, covetous, or proud,
Bloody, or envious, as any man,
If he had means to be so.

Enter CARDINAL

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.

Exit CARDINAL

I have known many travel far for it, and yet return as arrant knaves as they went forth, because they carried themselves always along with them. 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 He and his brother are like plum-trees that grow crooked over standing pools; they are rich and o'erladen with fruit, but none but crows and caterpillars feed on them. Could I be one of their flattering panders, I would hang on their ears like a horseleech till I were full, and then drop off. Who would rely upon these miserable dependencies, in expectation to be advanced tomorrow? What creature ever fed worse than hoping Tantalus? Nor ever died any man more fearfully than he that hoped for a pardon. There are rewards for hawks and dogs when they have done us service; but for a soldier that hazards his limbs in battle, nothing but a kind of geometry is his last supportation.

DELIO Geometry?

BOSOLA Ay, to hang in a fair pair of slings, take his latter swing in the world upon an honourable pair of crutches, from hospital to hospital. Fare ye well, sir. And yet do not you scorn us, for places in the court are but like beds in the hospital, where this man's head lies at that man's foot, and so lower and lower.

Exit BOSOLA

DELIO 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, for, I'll tell you,
If too immoderate sleep be truly said
To be an inward rust unto the soul,
It then doth follow want of action
Breeds all black malcontents, and their close rearing,
Like moths in cloth, do hurt for want of wearing.

Enter SILVIO, CASTRUCCIO and GRISOLAN DELIO The presence 'gins to fill. You promised me To make me the partaker of the natures Of some of your great courtiers.

ANTONIO I shall.

Enter FERDINAND

Here comes the great Calabrian Duke.

FERDINAND When shall we leave this sportive action, and fall to action indeed?

CASTRUCCIO Methinks, my lord, you should not desire to go to war in person.

FERDINAND Now for some gravity. Why, my lord?

CASTRUCCIO It is fitting a soldier arise to be a prince, but not necessary a prince descend to be a captain.

FERDINAND No?

CASTRUCCIO No, my lord, he were far better do it by a deputy.

FERDINAND Why should he not as well sleep or eat by a deputy? This might take idle, offensive, and base office from him, whereas the other deprives him of honour.

CASTRUCCIO Believe my experience: that realm is never long in quiet, where the ruler is a soldier.

FERDINAND Thou told'st me thy wife could not endure fighting.

CASTRUCCIO True, my lord.

FERDINAND And of a jest she broke of a captain she met full of wounds: I have forgot it.

CASTRUCCIO She told him, my lord, he was a pitiful fellow, to lie, like the children of Israel, all in tents.

FERDINAND Why, there's a wit were able to undo all the chirurgeons o' the city, for although gallants should quarrel, and had drawn their weapons, and were ready to go to it, yet her persuasions would make them put up.

CASTRUCCIO That she would, my lord.

FERDINAND How do you like my Spanish jennet?

SILVIO 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.

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

GRISOLAN and CASTRUCCIO laugh

FERDINAND Why do you laugh? Methinks you that are courtiers should be my touchwood, take fire when I give fire; that is, laugh when I laugh, were the subject never so witty.

CASTRUCCIO True, my lord, I myself have heard a very good jest, and have scorned to seem to have so silly a wit as to understand it.

FERDINAND I shall shortly visit you at Milan, Lord Silvio.

SILVIO Your grace shall arrive most welcome.

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

ANTONIO Nobly, my lord. As out of the Grecian horse issued many famous princes, so out of brave horsemanship arise the first sparks of growing resolution that raise the mind to noble action.

FERDINAND You have bespoke it worthily.

GRISOLAN Your brother, the Lord Cardinal, and sister Duchess.

Enter CARDINAL, DUCHESS, CARIOLA and JULIA

CARDINAL Are the galleys come about?

GRISOLAN

They are, my lord.

FERDINAND Here's the Lord Silvio is come to take his leave.

DELIO (to Antonio) Now, sir, your promise: what's that Cardinal? I mean his temper? They say he's a brave fellow, Will play his five thousand crowns at tennis, dance, Court ladies, and one that hath fought single combats.

ANTONIO Some such flashes superficially hang on him, for form; but observe his inward character: he is a melancholy churchman. Where he is jealous of any man for 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 as if he would have carried it away without heaven's knowledge.

DELIO You have given too much of him. What's his brother?

ANTONIO The Duke there? A most perverse and turbulent nature. If he laugh heartily,

It is to laugh all honesty out of fashion.

DELIO Twins?

ANTONIO In quality: He speaks with others' tongues, and hears men's suits With others' ears; will seem to sleep o' th' bench Only to entrap offenders in their answers; Dooms men to death by information, Rewards by hearsay.

DELIO Then the law to him Is like a foul, black cobweb to a spider: He makes it his dwelling and a prison To entangle those shall feed him.

ANTONIO Most true.

He never pays debts unless they be shrewd terms,
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.
For her discourse, it is so full of rapture,
You only will begin then to be sorry
When she doth end her speech, and wish, in wonder,

She held it less vainglory to talk much,
Than your penance to hear her. Whilst 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; but in that look
There speaketh so divine a continence
As cuts off all lascivious and vain hope.
Her days are practised in such noble virtue,
That sure her nights, nay more, her very sleeps,
Are more in heaven than other ladies' shrifts.
Let all sweet ladies break their flatt'ring glasses,
And dress themselves in her.

DELIO Fie, Antonio, You play the wire-drawer with her commendations.

ANTONIO I'll case the picture up, only thus much: All her particular worth grows to this sum: She stains the time past, lights the time to come.

CARIOLA joins ANTONIO and DELIO

CARIOLA You must attend my lady in the gallery, Some half an hour hence.

ANTONIO I shall. 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.

FERDINAND Call him hither.

Exit GRISOLAN

We are now upon parting. Good Lord Silvio, Do us commend to all our noble friends At the leaguer.

SILVIO Sir, I shall.

DUCHESS You are for Milan?

SILVIO I am.

DUCHESS Bring the caroches; we'll bring you down to the haven.

Exeunt all except CARDINAL and FERDINAND

CARDINAL Be sure you entertain that Bosola For your intelligence. I would not be seen in 't; 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 You are deceived in him. His nature is too honest for such business.

Enter BOSOLA

He comes: I'll leave you.

Exit CARDINAL

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 Doth he study physiognomy? There's no more credit to be given to the face Than to a sick man's urine, which some call The physician's whore, because she cozens him. He did suspect me wrongfully.

FERDINAND For that You must give great men leave to take their times. Distrust doth cause us seldom be deceived; You see the oft shaking of the cedar-tree Fastens it more at root.

BOSOLA Yet take heed: For to suspect a friend unworthily Instructs him the next way to suspect you, And prompts him to deceive you.

FERDINAND There's gold.

BOSOLA So: What follows? Never rained such show'rs as these Without thunderbolts in the tail of them. 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 i' the court here, and observe the Duchess; To note all the particulars of her 'haviour, 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 say I would not.

BOSOLA It seems you would create me One of your familiars.

FERDINAND Familiar! What's that?

BOSOLA Why, a very quaint invisible devil, in flesh: An intelligencer.

FERDINAND Such a kind of thriving thing I would wish thee, and ere long thou mayst arrive At a higher place by 't.

BOSOLA Take your devils
Which hell calls angels! These cursed gifts would make
You a corrupter, me an impudent traitor,
And should I take these, they'd take me to hell.

FERDINAND Sir, I'll take nothing from you that I have given. There is a place that I procured for you This morning, the provisorship o' th' horse; Have you heard on't?

BOSOLA No.

FERDINAND

'Tis yours. Is 't not worth thanks?

BOSOLA I would have you curse yourself now, that your bounty, Which makes men truly noble, e'er should make Me a villain. O, that to avoid ingratitude For the good deed you have done me, I must do All the ill man can invent. Thus the devil Candies all sins o'er; and what heaven terms vile, That names he complimental.

FERDINAND

Be yourself:
Keep your old garb of melancholy; 'twill express
You envy those that stand above your reach,
Yet strive not to come near 'em. This will gain
Access to private lodgings, where yourself
May, like a politic dormouse ---

BOSOLA As I have seen some Feed in a lord's dish, half asleep, not seeming To listen to any talk; and yet these rogues Have cut his throat in a dream. What's my place? The provisorship o' th' horse? Say then my corruption Grew out of horse-dung. I am your creature.

FERDINAND Away.

BOSOLA Let good men, for good deeds, covet good fame, Since place and riches oft are bribes of shame; Sometimes the devil doth preach.

Exit BOSOLA. Enter DUCHESS and CARDINAL

CARDINAL 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.

CARDINAL O, fie!

FERDINAND Their livers are more spotted Than Laban's sheep.

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, i' th' court;
There is a kind of honey-dew that's deadly;
'Twill poison your fame; look to 't; be not cunning;
For they whose faces do belie their hearts
Are witches ere they arrive at twenty years;
Ay, and give the devil suck.

DUCHESS This is terrible good counsel.

FERDINAND Hypocrisy is woven of a fine small thread, Subtler than Vulcan's engine; yet, believe 't, Your darkest actions, nay, your privat'st 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 't the best voyage That e'er you made like the irregular crab, Which, though 't goes backward, thinks that it goes right Because it goes its own way. 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.

Exit CARDINAL

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

FERDINAND You are my sister,
This was my father's poniard: do you see?
I'd be loth to see 't look rusty, 'cause 'twas his.
I would have you give o'er these chargeable revels:
A visor and a mask are whispering-rooms
That were ne'er built for goodness. Fare ye well.
Women like that part which, like the lamprey,
Hath ne'er a bone in 't.

DUCHESS Fie, sir!

FERDINAND Nay, I mean the tongue: variety of courtship. 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; and even now, Even in this hate, as men in some great battles By apprehending danger have achieved Almost impossible actions, so I through frights, And threatenings will assay this dangerous venture. Let old wives report I winked and chose a husband. Cariola.

Enter 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 Thy protestation Is ingenious and hearty: I believe it. Is Antonio come?

CARIOLA He attends you.

DUCHESS Good dear soul, Leave me, but place thyself behind the arras, Where thou may'st overhear us. Wish me good speed For I am going into a wilderness, Where I shall find nor path nor friendly clue To be my guide.

CARIOLA goes behind the arras. Enter ANTONIO

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 tomorrow.

ANTONIO So please your beauteous excellence.

DUCHESS
Indeed I thank you: I look young for your sake.
You have ta'en my cares upon you.

Beauteous!

ANTONIO I'll fetch your grace The particulars of your revenue and expense.

DUCHESS O, you are an upright treasurer; but you mistook, For when I said I meant to make inquiry What's laid up for tomorrow, 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; and I pray, sir, tell me Were not one better make it smiling, thus, Than in deep groans, and terrible ghastly looks?

ANTONIO O, much better.

DUCHESS 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 that first good deed began i' th' world After man's creation, 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 Saint Winifred, that were a strange will!

ANTONIO 'Twere strange if there were no will in you To marry again.

DUCHESS What do you think of marriage?

ANTONIO I take 't as those that deny purgatory: It locally contains or heaven or hell; There's no third place in 't.

DUCHESS How do you affect it?

ANTONIO My banishment, feeding my melancholy, Would often reason thus: ---

DUCHESS Pray, let's hear 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 bloodshot; use my ring to 't.
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 eyesight.

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. He kneels

ANTONIO What said you?

DUCHESS Sir,

This goodly roof of yours is too low built; I cannot stand upright in 't, nor discourse Without I raise it higher: raise yourself.

Or, if you please, my hand to help you, so. (She raises him)

ANTONIO Ambition, madam, is a great man's madness, That is not kept in chains and close-pent rooms, But in fair lightsome lodgings, and is girt With the wild noise of prattling visitants, Which makes it lunatic beyond all cure. Conceive not I am so stupid but I aim Whereto your favours tend; but he's a fool That, being a-cold, would thrust his hands i' th' fire To warm them.

DUCHESS So, now the ground's broke, You may discover what a wealthy mine I make your lord of.

ANTONIO O my unworthiness.

DUCHESS You were ill to sell yourself; This darkning of your worth is not like that Which tradesmen use i' th' city: their false lights Are to rid bad wares off; and I must tell you, If you will know where breathes a complete man (I speak it without flattery) turn your eyes And progress through yourself.

ANTONIO Were there nor heaven nor hell, I should be honest, I have long served virtue, And ne'er ta'en wages of her.

DUCHESS Now she pays it. The misery of us that are born great: We are forced to woo, because none dare woo us; And as a tyrant doubles with his words, And fearfully equivocates, so we Are forced to express our violent passions In riddles, and in dreams, and leave the path Of simple virtue, which was never made To seem the thing it is not. Go, go brag You have left me heartless: mine is in your bosom, I hope 'twill multiply love there. You do tremble: Make not your heart so dead a piece of flesh. To fear more than to love me. Sir, 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, and, like a widow I use but half a blush in 't.

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*) This you should have begged now. I have seen children oft eat sweetmeats thus, As fearful to devour them too soon.

ANTONIO But for your brothers?

DUCHESS Do not think of them.
All discord without this circumference,
Is only to be pitied, and not feared; Yet, should they know it
Time will easily scatter the tempest.

ANTONIO These words should be mine, And all the parts you have spoke, if some part of it Would not have savoured flattery.

DUCHESS Kneel.

They kneel. CARIOLA comes from behind the arras

ANTONIO Hah?

DUCHESS Be not amazed, this woman's of my counsel. I have heard lawyers say, a contract in a chamber *Per verba de presenti* is absolute marriage. Bless, heaven, this sacred Gordian which let violence Never untwine.

ANTONIO And may our sweet affections, like the spheres, Be still in motion.

DUCHESS Quickening, and make The like soft music.

ANTONIO That we may imitate the loving palms, Best emblem of a peaceful marriage, That never bore fruit divided.

DUCHESS What can the church force more?

ANTONIO That Fortune may not know an accident, Either of joy or sorrow, to divide Our fixed wishes.

DUCHESS How can the church build faster? We now are man and wife, and 'tis the church That must but echo this. Maid, stand apart. 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 (You speak in me this, for we now are one). We'll only lie and talk together, and plot T' appease my humorous kindred; and if you please, Like the old tale, in 'Alexander and Lodovic', Lay a naked sword between us, keep us chaste. O, let me shroud my blushes in your bosom, Since 'tis the treasury of all my secrets.

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

2.1 (Night) (Interior?) Enter BOSOLA and CASTRUCCIO

BOSOLA You say you would fain be taken for an eminent courtier?

CASTRUCCIO 'Tis the very main of my ambition.

BOSOLA Let me see, you have a reasonable good face for 't already, and your night-cap expresses your ears sufficient largely. I would have you learn to twirl the strings of your band with a good grace, and in a set speech, at th' end of every sentence, to hum three or four times, or blow your nose till it smart again, to recover your memory. When you come to be a president in criminal causes, if you smile upon a prisoner, hang him; but if you frown upon him and threaten him, let him be sure to 'scape the gallows.

CASTRUCCIO I would be a very merry president.

BOSOLA Do not sup o' nights, 'twill beget you an admirable wit.

CASTRUCCIO Rather it would make me have a good stomach to quarrel, for they say, your roaring boys eat meat seldom, and that makes them so valiant. But how shall I know whether the people take me for an eminent fellow?

BOSOLA I will teach a trick to know it: give out you lie a-dying, and if you hear the common people curse you, be sure you are taken for one of the prime lawyers.

Enter OLD LADY

You come from painting now.

OLD LADY From what?

BOSOLA Why, from your scurvy face-physic. To behold thee not painted inclines somewhat near a miracle. These, in thy face here, were deep ruts and foul sloughs the last progress. There was a lady in France that, having had the small-pox, flayed the skin off her face to make it more level; and whereas before she looked like a nutmeg-grater, after she resembled an abortive hedgehog.

OLD LADY Do you call this painting?

BOSOLA No, no, but careening of an old morphewed lady, to make her disembogue again. There's rough-cast phrase to your plastic.

OLD LADY It seems you are well acquainted with my closet.

BOSOLA One would suspect it for a shop of witchcraft, to find in it the fat of serpents, spawn of snakes, Jews' spittle, and their young children's ordures; and all these for the face. I would sooner eat a dead pigeon, taken from the soles of the feet of one sick of the plague, than kiss one of you fasting. Here are two of you, whose sin of your youth is the very patrimony of the physician; makes him renew his foot-cloth with the spring, and change his high-prized courtesan with the fall of the leaf. I do wonder you do not loathe yourselves. Observe my meditation now:

What thing is in this outward form of man To be beloved? We account it ominous, If nature do produce a colt, or lamb, A fawn, or goat, in any limb resembling

A man, and fly from 't as a prodigy.

Man stands amazed to see his deformity
In any other creature but himself.

But in our own flesh, though we bear diseases
Which have their true names only ta'en from beasts,
As the most ulcerous wolf and swinish measle,
Though we are eaten up of lice and worms,
And though continually we bear about us
A rotten and dead body, we delight
To hide it in rich tissue. All our fear,
Nay, all our terror, is lest our physician
Should put us in the ground to be made sweet.
Your wife's gone to Rome: you two couple, and get you
To the wells at Lucca to recover your aches.

Exeunt CASTRUCCIO and OLD LADY

I have other work on foot. I observe our Duchess Is sick o'days, she pukes, her stomach seethes, The fins of her eyelids look most teeming blue, She wanes i' th' cheek, and waxes fat i' th' 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, A pretty one: I have bought some apricots, The first our spring yields.

Enter ANTONIO and DELIO in conversation apart

DELIO And so long since married? You amaze me.

ANTONIO Let me seal your lips for ever, For did I think that anything but th' 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, the opinion of wisdom is a foul tetter that runs all over a man's body: if simplicity direct us to have no evil, it directs us to a happy being, for the subtlest folly

proceeds from the subtlest wisdom. Let me be simply honest.

ANTONIO I do understand your inside.

BOSOLA Do you so?

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

BOSOLA Give me leave to be honest in any phrase, in any compliment whatsoever. Shall I confess myself to you? I look no higher than I can reach. They are the gods that must ride on winged horses; a lawyer's mule of a slow pace will both suit my disposition and business; for mark me, when a man's mind rides faster than his horse can gallop, they quickly both tire.

ANTONIO You would look up to heaven, but I think

The devil, that rules i'th' air, stands in your light.

BOSOLA O, sir, you are lord of the ascendant, chief man with the Duchess, a Duke was your cousin-german removed. Say you were lineally descended from King Pepin, or he himself, what of this? Search the heads of the greatest rivers in the world, you shall find

them but bubbles of water. Some would think the souls of princes were brought forth by some more weighty cause than those of meaner persons. They are deceived; there's the same hand to them, the like passions sway them: the same reason that makes a vicar go to law for a tithe-pig and undo his neighbours, makes them spoil a whole province, and batter down goodly cities with the cannon.

Enter DUCHESS, CARIOLA and OLD LADY

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 I think she did. (To OLD LADY) Come hither, mend my ruff. Here, when? Thou art such a tedious lady, and Thy breath smells of lemon pills. Would thou hadst done! Shall I swoon under thy fingers? I am So troubled with the mother.

BOSOLA (aside) I fear too much.

DUCHESS I have heard you say that the French courtiers Wear their hats on 'fore the King.

ANTONIO I have seen it.

DUCHESS Why should not we bring up that fashion? 'Tis ceremony more than duty that consists In the removing of a piece of felt. Be you the example to the rest o' th' court, Put on your hat first.

ANTONIO You must pardon me: I have seen, in colder countries than in France, Nobles stand bare to th' Prince; and the distinction Methought showed reverently.

BOSOLA I have a present for your grace.

DUCHESS For me, sir?

BOSOLA Apricots, madam.

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

He gives her them

BOSOLA (aside) Good, her colour rises.

DUCHESS Indeed I thank you; they are wondrous fair ones.

BOSOLA Will not your grace pare them?

DUCHESS No, they taste of musk, methinks; indeed they do.

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

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 loath To rob us of our dainties: 'tis a delicate fruit, They say they are restorative.

BOSOLA 'Tis a pretty art,

This grafting.

DUCHESS 'Tis so: a bettering of nature.

BOSOLA To make a pippin grow upon a crab,

A damson on a black-thorn. (Aside) How greedily she eats them! But for that lose bodied gown, I should have discovered the young spring-al 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.

DUCHESS O, I am in an extreme cold sweat!

BOSOLA I am very sorry.

DUCHESS Lights to my chamber. O good Antonio, I fear I am undone.

DELIO Lights there, lights!

Exeunt all except ANTONIO and DELIO

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

DELIO Have you prepared
Those ladies to attend her? And procured
That politic safe conveyance for the midwife
Your Duchess plotted?

ANTONIO I have.

DELIO Make use, then, of this forced occasion. Give out that Bosola hath poisoned her With these apricots: that will give some colour For her keeping close.

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

DELIO For that you may pretend She'll use some prepared antidote of her own, Lest the physicians should repoison her.

ANTONIO I am lost in amazement, I know not what to think.

Exeunt

2.2 (Segue ?) Enter BOSOLA

BOSOLA So, so: there's no question but her tetchiness and most vulturous eating of the apricots are apparent signs of breeding.

Enter OLD LADY. BOSOLA intercepts her

OLD LADY Now? I am in haste, sir.

BOSOLA There was a young waiting-woman had a monstrous desire to see the glass-house.

OLD LADY Nay, pray, let me go.

BOSOLA And it was only to know what strange instrument it was should swell up a glass to the fashion of a woman's belly.

OLD LADY I will hear no more of the glass-house; you are still abusing women!

BOSOLA Who, I? No, only, by the way now and then mention your frailties. The orange tree bears ripe and green fruit and blossoms all together, and some of you give entertainment for pure love, but more, for more precious reward. Go, go, give your foster-daughters good counsel: tell them that the devil takes delight to hang at a woman's girdle, like a false rusty watch, that she cannot discern how the time passes.

Exit OLD LADY. Enter ANTONIO, DELIO and GRISOLAN

ANTONIO Shut up the court gates.

DELIO Why, sir? What's the danger?

ANTONIO Shut up the posterns presently, and call All the officers o' th' court.

GRISOLAN I shall instantly.

Exit GRISOLAN

ANTONIO Who keeps the key o' th' park-gate?

DELIO Forobosco.

ANTONIO Let him bring 't presently.

Re-enter GRISOLAN with 2 Officers

ANTONIO O, gentleman o' th' court, the foulest treason!

BOSOLA (Aside) If that these apricots should be poisoned now, Without my knowledge!

FIRST OFFICER There was taken even now a Switzer in the Duchess' bedchamber.

DELIO A Switzer?

SECOND OFFICER With a pistol in his great cod-piece.

FIRST OFFICER The cod-piece was the case for 't.

GRISOLAN There was a cunning traitor. Who would have searched his codpiece?

SECOND OFFICER 'Twas a French plot, upon my life.

FIRST OFFICER To see what the devil can do!

ANTONIO Gentlemen,

We have lost much plate and but this evening Jewels, to the value of four thousand ducats,

Are missing in the Duchess' cabinet.

Are the gates shut?

OFFICERS Yes.

ANTONIO 'Tis the Duchess' pleasure

Each officer be locked into his chamber Till the sun-rising; and to send the keys

Of all their chests and of their outward doors,

Into her bedchamber. She is very sick.

GRISOLAN At her pleasure.

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

BOSOLA (to FIRST OFFICER) Gentlemen o' the wood-yard, where's your Switzer now?

FIRST OFFICER By this hand, 'twas credibly reported by one o' the black guard.

Exeunt all except ANTONIO and DELIO

DELIO How fares it with the Duchess?

ANTONIO She's exposed

Unto the worst of torture, pain, and fear.

DELIO Speak to her all happy comfort.

ANTONIO How I do play the fool with mine own danger! You are, this night, dear friend, to post to Rome; My life lies in your service.

DELIO Do not doubt me.

ANTONIO O, 'tis far from me, and yet fear presents me Somewhat that looks like danger.

DELIO Believe it,
'Tis but the shadow of your fear, no more.
How superstitiously we mind our evils!
The throwing down salt, or crossing of a hare,
Bleeding at nose, the stumbling of a horse,
Or singing of a cricket, are of power
To daunt whole man in us. Sir, fare you well.
I wish you all the joys of a blessed father;
And, for my faith, lay this unto your breast:
Old friends, like old swords, still are trusted best.

Exit DELIO. Enter CARIOLA

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

ANTONIO Blessed comfort! For heaven' sake, tend her well; I'll presently Go set a figure for 's nativity.

Exeunt

2.3 (Night) (Exterior?)

Enter BOSOLA, with a dark lantern

BOSOLA Sure I did hear a woman shriek: list, ha? And the sound came, if I received it right, From the Duchess' lodgings. There's some stratagem In the confining all our courtiers To their several wards. I must have part of it, My intelligence will freeze else. List, again! It may be 'twas the melancholy bird, Best friend of silence and of solitariness, The owl, that screamed so.

Enter ANTONIO

Ha! Antonio!

ANTONIO I heard some noise. Who's there? What art thou? Speak.

BOSOLA Antonio? Put not your face nor body To such a forced expression of fear: I am Bosola, your friend.

ANTONIO Bosola! (Aside) This mole does undermine me. (To him) 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: it may be 'twas But the rising of the wind.

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

ANTONIO I have been setting a figure For the Duchess' jewels.

BOSOLA Ah, and how falls your question? Do you find it radical?

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 court's asleep, I thought the devil Had least to do here; I came to say my prayers. And if it do offend you I do so, You are a fine courtier.

ANTONIO (Aside) This fellow will undo me. (To him) You gave the Duchess apricots today. 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 stol'n too:
In my conceit, none are to be suspected
More than yourself.

BOSOLA You are a false steward.

ANTONIO 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: Are you scarce warm, and do you show your sting?

BOSOLA

ANTONIO You libel well, sir.

BOSOLA No, sir, copy it out, And I will set my hand to 't.

ANTONIO (Aside) My nose bleeds.

He draws an initialled handkerchief

One that were superstitious would count This ominous, when it merely comes by chance: Two letters, that are wrought here for my name, Are drowned in blood! Mere accident. (To him) For you, sir, I'll take order: I' th' morn you shall be safe. (Aside) 'Tis that must colour Her lying-in. (To him) Sir, this door you pass not: I do not hold it fit that you come near The Duchess' lodgings, till you have quit yourself. (Aside) The great are like the base, nay, they are the same, When they seek shameful ways to avoid shame.

Exit Antonio

BOSOLA Antonio hereabout did drop a paper. Some of your help, false friend. O, 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, Anno Dom. 1504' - that 's this year - 'decimo nono Decembris' - that's this night - 'taken according to the meridian of Malfi' - that 's our Duchess: happy discovery! - 'The lord of the first house being combust in the ascendant, signifies short life; and Mars being in a human sign, joined to the tail of the Dragon, in the eighth house, doth threaten a violent death; Caetera non scrutantur.'

Why, now 'tis most apparent. I have it to my wish. This precise fellow is the duchess' drudge This is a parcel of intelligency Our courtiers were cased up for! It needs must follow That I must be committed on pretence Of poisoning her; which I'll endure, and laugh at. If one could find the father now; but that Time will discover. Old Castruccio I' th' morning posts to Rome; by him I'll send A letter that shall make her brothers' galls O'erflow their livers. This was a thrifty way! Though lust do mask in ne'er so strange disguise, She's oft found witty, but is never wise.

2.4 (Rome)

Enter CARDINAL and JULIA

CARDINAL Sit, thou art my best of wishes. 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 We had need go borrow that fantastic glass Invented by Galileo the Florentine To view another spacious world i' th' moon, And look to find a constant woman there.

JULIA This is very well, 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. 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: still you are to thank me.
Thou hadst only kisses from him and high feeding;
But what delight was that? 'Twas just like one
That hath a little fingering on the lute,
Yet cannot tune it: still you are to thank me.

JULIA You told me of a piteous wound i' th' heart, And a sick liver, when you wooed me first, And spake like one in physic.

Knocking within

CARDINAL Who's that? Rest firm, for my affection to thee, Lightning moves slow to't.

Enter Servant

SERVANT Your husband, old Castruccio is come to Rome. He hath delivered a letter to the duke of Calabria that, to my thinking, hath put him out of his wits.

CARDINAL I'll withdraw.

Exit CARDINAL

SERVANT Madam, a gentleman,
That's come post from Malfi desires to see you.
He says Your husband is come to Rome most pitifully tired with riding post.

Exit Servant. Enter DELIO

JULIA Signor Delio! (Aside) 'Tis one of my old suitors.

DELIO I was bold to come and see you.

JULIA Sir, you are welcome.

DELIO Do you lie here?

JULIA Sure, your own experience
Will satisfy you, no: our Roman prelates
Do not keep lodging for ladies.
DELIO Very well.

I have brought you no commendations from your husband,

For I know none by him.

JULIA I hear he's come to Rome?

DELIO I never knew man and beast, of a horse and a knight, So weary of each other. If he had had a good back, He would have undertook to have borne his horse, His breech was so pitifully sore.

JULIA Your laughter

Is my pity.

DELIO Lady, I know not whether You want money, but I have brought you some.

JULIA From my husband?

DELIO No, from mine own allowance.

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

DELIO Look on 't, 'tis gold: hath it not a fine colour?

JULIA I have a bird more beautiful.

DELIO Try the sound on 't.

JULIA A lute-string far exceeds it.
It hath no smell, like cassia or civet ---

Re-enter Servant

SERVANT Your husband's come

Exit Servant

JULIA Sir, you hear. Pray, let me know your Business and your suit as briefly as can be.

DELIO With good speed: I would wish you, At such time as you are non-resident With your husband, my mistress.

JULIA Sir, I'll go ask my husband if I shall, And straight return your answer.

Exit JULIA

DELIO Very fine. Is this her wit, or honesty, that speaks thus?

Exit

2.5

Enter CARDINAL, and FERDINAND with a letter

FERDINAND I have this night digged up a mandrake.

CARDINAL Say you?

FERDINAND And I am grown mad with 't.

CARDINAL What's the prodigy?

FERDINAND Read there, a sister damned: she's loose i' the hilts; Grown a notorious strumpet.

CARDINAL Speak lower.

FERDINAND Lower!
Rogues do not whisper 't now, but seek to publish 't
As servants do the bounty of their lords,
Aloud; and with a covetous searching eye
To mark who note them. 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 't 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, The royal blood of Aragon and Castile, 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. 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! Unequal nature, to place women's hearts So far upon the left side!

FERDINAND Foolish men, That e'er will trust their honour in a bark Made of so slight weak bulrush as is woman, Apt every minute to sink it! CARDINAL Thus ignorance, when it hath purchased honour, It cannot wield it.

FERDINAND Methinks I see her laughing. Excellent hyena! Talk to me somewhat 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 o' th' wood-yard that can quoit the sledge Or toss the bar, 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 which carries you, As men conveyed by witches through the air On violent whirlwinds! This intemperate noise Fitly resembles deaf men's shrill discourse, Who talk aloud, thinking all other men To have their imperfection.

FERDINAND Have not you My palsy?

CARDINAL Yes, I can be angry
Without this rupture. There is not in nature
A thing that makes man so deformed, so beastly,
As doth intemperate anger. Chide yourself.
You have divers men who never yet expressed
Their strong desire of rest but by unrest,
By vexing of themselves. Come, put yourself in tune.

FERDINAND So I will only study to seem The thing I am not. 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 with the ventage stopped, That their cursed smoke might not ascend to heaven; Or dip the sheets they lie in, in pitch or sulphur, Wrap them in 't, and then light them like a match; Or else to boil their bastard to a cullis, And give 't his lecherous father to renew The sin of his back.

CARDINAL I'll leave you.

FERDINAND Nay, I have done. I am confident, had I been damned in hell, And should have heard of this, it would have put me Into a cold sweat. 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

3.1 (Malfi – a year later) Enter ANTONIO and DELIO

ANTONIO Our noble friend, my most beloved Delio, O, you have been a stranger long at court. Came you along with the Lord Ferdinand?

DELIO I did, sir; and how fares your noble Duchess?

ANTONIO Right fortunately well. She's an excellent Feeder of pedigrees: since you last saw her, She hath had two children more, twins, a son and daughter.

DELIO Methinks 'twas yesterday. Let me but wink, And not behold your face, which to mine eye Is somewhat leaner, verily I should dream It were within this half hour. Pray, sir, tell me, Hath not this news arrived yet to the ear Of her brothers?

ANTONIO I fear it hath.

The Lord Ferdinand, that's newly come to court,

Doth bear himself right dangerously.

DELIO Pray, how?

ANTONIO He is so quiet that he seems to sleep The tempest out, as dormice do in winter. Those houses that are haunted are most still Till the devil be up.

DELIO What say the common people?

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

DELIO And your graver heads Which would be politic, 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, say they, Great princes, though they grudge their officers Should have such large and unconfined means To get wealth under them, will not complain Lest thereby they should make them odious Unto the people; for other obligation Of love or marriage between her and me They never dream of.

Enter FERDINAND and DUCHESS
FERDINAND I'll instantly to bed,
For I am weary. (To Duchess) I am to bespeak
A husband for you.

DUCHESS For me, sir! Pray, who is 't?

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 't: One of Pasquil's paper-bullets, court-calumny, A pestilent air, which princes' palaces Are seldom purg'd of. Yet, say that it were true, I pour it in your bosom, my fixed love Would strongly excuse, extenuate, nay, deny Faults, were they apparent in you. Go, be safe In your own innocency.

DUCHESS O blessed comfort! This deadly air is purg'd.

Exeunt all except FERDINAND

FERDINAND Her guilt treads on Hot-burning coulters.

Enter BOSOLA

Now, Bosola, How thrives our intelligence?

BOSOLA Sir, uncertainly.
'Tis rumoured she hath had three bastards, but By whom, we may go read i' 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 Can your faith give way To think there's power in potions or in charms, To make us love whether we will or no?

BOSOLA Most certainly.

FERDINAND Away, these are mere gulleries, horrid things, 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, within these two days, a false key Into her bedchamber.

BOSOLA I have.

FERDINAND As I would wish.

BOSOLA What do you intend to do?

FERDINAND Can you guess?

BOSOLA No.

FERDINAND Do not ask, then. He that can compass me, and know my drifts, May say he hath put a girdle 'bout the world, And sounded all her quicksands.

BOSOLA I do not

Think so.

FERDINAND What do you think, then, pray?

BOSOLA That you Are your own chronicle too much, and grossly Flatter yourself.

FERDINAND Give me thy hand; I thank thee. I never gave pension but to flatterers, Till I entertained thee. Farewell; That friend a great man's ruin strongly checks, Who rails into his belief all his defects.

Exeunt

3.2

Enter DUCHESS, ANTONIO and CARIOLA

DUCHESS Bring me the casket hither, and the glass. You get no lodging here tonight, 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 gives the DUCHESS the casket and a mirror

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's the sprawling'st 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, Are glad when their task's 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.

Kisses her

When wilt thou marry, Cariola?

CARIOLA Never, my lord.

ANTONIO O fie upon this single life. Forgo it. We read how Daphne, for her peevish flight Became a fruitless bay-tree; Syrinx turned To the pale empty reed; Anaxarete Was frozen into marble: whereas those Which married, or proved kind unto their friends, Were by a gracious influence transshaped Into the olive, pomegranate, mulberry, Became flowers, precious stones, or eminent stars.

CARIOLA This is a vain poetry. But 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 't, and there was a great cause: For how was 't possible he could judge right, Having three amorous goddesses in view, And they stark naked? 'Twas a motion

Were able to benight the apprehension Of the severest counsellor of Europe. Now I look on both your faces so well formed, It puts me in mind of a question I would ask.

CARIOLA What is 't?

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 Pray thee, Cariola, let's steal forth the room, And let her talk to herself. I have divers times Served her the like, when she hath chafed extremely. I love to see her angry. Softly, Cariola.

Exeunt ANTONIO and CARIOLA

DUCHESS Doth not the colour of my hair 'gin to change? When I wax gray, I shall have all the court Powder their hair with orris to be like me.

Enter FERDINAND unseen

You have cause to love me: I entered you into my heart Before you would vouchsafe to call for the keys. We shall one day have my brothers take you napping. Methinks his 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?

Sees FERDINAND who holds a poinard

'Tis welcome:

For know, whether I am doomed to live or die, I can do both like a prince.

He gives her the poinard

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

DUCHESS Pray, sir, hear me.

FERDINAND Or is it true thou art but a bare name, And no essential thing?

DUCHESS Sir ---

FERDINAND Do not speak.

DUCHESS No, sir.

I will plant my soul in mine ears, to hear you.

FERDINAND O most imperfect light of human reason, That mak 'st us so unhappy to foresee What we can least prevent. Pursue thy wishes, And glory in them: there's in shame no comfort But to be past all bounds and sense of shame.

DUCHESS I pray, sir, hear me: 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 Yes, if I could change Eyes with a basilisk.

DUCHESS Sure, you came hither By his confederacy.

FERDINAND The howling of a wolf Is music to thee, screech-owl: prithee, peace. Whate'er thou art that hast enjoyed my sister (For I am sure thou hear'st 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. I would not for ten millions I had beheld thee; therefore use all means I never may have knowledge of thy name. Enjoy thy lust still, and a wretched life, On that condition. And for thee, vile woman, If thou do wish thy lecher may grow old In thy embracements, I would have thee build Such a room for him as our anchorites To holier use inhabit. Let not the sun Shine on him till he's dead. Let dogs and monkeys Only converse with him, and such dumb things To whom nature denies use to sound his name. Do not keep a paraquito, lest she learn it. If thou do love him, cut out thine own tongue, Lest it bewray him.

DUCHESS Why might not I marry? I have not gone about in this to create Any new world or custom.

FERDINAND Thou art undone; And thou hast ta'en that massy sheet of lead That hid thy fathers bones, and folded it About my heart. DUCHESS Mine bleeds for 't.

FERDINAND Thine? Thy heart? What should I name 't unless a hollow bullet Filled with unquenchable wild-fire?

DUCHESS You are in this
Too strict; and were you not my princely brother,
I would say too willful. My reputation
Is safe.

FERDINAND Dost thou know what reputation is? I'll tell thee, to small purpose, since the instruction Comes now too late: Upon a time Reputation, Love, and Death, Would travel o'er the world; and it was concluded That they should part, and take three several ways. Death told them they should find him in great battles, Or cities plagued with plagues. Love gives them counsel To inquire for him 'mongst unambitious shepherds. Where dowries were not talked of, and sometimes 'Mongst quiet kindred that had nothing left By their dead parents. 'Stay,' quoth Reputation, 'Do not forsake me; for it is my nature, If once I part from any man I meet, I am never found again.' And so, for you: You have shook hands with Reputation, And made him invisible. So, 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 So you have some virgins That are witches. I will never see thee more.

Exit FERDINAND. Enter ANTONIO and CARIOLA

DUCHESS You saw this apparition?

ANTONIO Yes: we are Betrayed. How came he hither? (*To Cariola*) I should turn To thee, for that.

CARIOLA Pray, sir, do; and when That you have cleft my heart, you shall read there Mine innocence.

DUCHESS That gallery gave him entrance.

ANTONIO I would this terrible thing would come again, That, standing on my guard, I might relate My warrantable love. Ha! 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.

ANTONIO This hath a handle to 't, As well as a point. Turn it towards him, And so fasten the keen edge in his rank gall.

Knocking within

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 Away!
O misery! Methinks unjust actions
Should wear these masks and curtains, and not we.
You must instantly part hence: I have fashioned it already.

Exit ANTONIO. Enter BOSOLA

BOSOLA The Duke your brother is ta'en up in a whirlwind, Hath took horse, and is rid post to Rome.

DUCHESS So late?

BOSOLA He told me, as he mounted into the saddle, You were undone.

DUCHESS Indeed, I am very near it.

BOSOLA What's the matter?

DUCHESS Antonio, the master of our household, Hath dealt so falsely with me in 's accounts. My brother stood engaged with me for money Ta'en up of certain Neapolitan Jews, And Antonio lets the bonds be forfeit.

BOSOLA Strange! (Aside) This is cunning.

DUCHESS And hereupon My brother's bills at Naples are protested Against. Call up our officers.

BOSOLA I shall.

Exit BOSOLA. Re-enter ANTONIO
DUCHESS The place that you must fly to is Ancona.
Hire a house there. I'll send after you
My treasure and my jewels. Our weak safety
Runs upon enginous wheels: short syllables
Must stand for periods. I must now accuse you

Of such a feigned crime as Tasso calls Magnanima menzogna, a noble lie, 'Cause it must shield our honours. Hark! They are coming.

Re-enter BOSOLA, GRISOLAN and Officers

ANTONIO Will your grace hear me?

DUCHESS I have got well by you: you have yielded me A million of loss. I am like to inherit
The people's curses for your stewardship.
You had the trick in audit-time to be sick,
Till I had signed your quietus; and that cured you
Without help of a doctor. (To Officers) Gentlemen,
I would have this man be an example to you all:
So shall you hold my favour. I pray, let him;
For he's done that, alas, you would not think of,
And, because I intend to be rid of him,
I mean not to publish. (To Antonio) Use your fortune elsewhere.

ANTONIO I am strongly armed to brook my overthrow, As commonly men bear with a hard year. I will not blame the cause on 't, but do think The necessity of my malevolent star Procures this, not her humour. O, the inconstant And rotten ground of service! You may see. 'Tis even like him, that in a winter night, Takes a long slumber o'er a dying fire, As loth to part from 't, yet parts thence as cold As when he first sat down.

DUCHESS 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.

DUCHESS So, sir, you have your pass.

ANTONIO You may see, gentlemen, what 'tis to serve A prince with body and soul.

Exit ANTONIO

DUCHESS I would know what are your opinions of this Antonio. FIRST OFFICER He stopped his ears with black wool; and to those came to him for money said he was thick of hearing.

SECOND OFFICER Some said he was an hermaphrodite, for he could not abide a woman.

GRISOLAN How scurvy proud he would look when the treasury was full! Well, let him go.

FIRST OFFICER Yes, and the chippings of the buttery fly after him, to scour his gold chain.

DUCHESS Leave us.

Exeunt GRISOLAN and Officers

What do you think of these?

BOSOLA That these are rogues that in his prosperity, But to have waited on his fortune, could have wished His dirty stirrup riveted through their noses, And followed after his mule, like a bear in a ring; Would have prostituted their daughters to his lust; Made their first-born intelligencers; thought none happy But such as were born under his blest planet, And wore his livery: and do these lice drop off now? Well, never look to have the like again. He hath left a sort of flattering rogues behind him; Their doom must follow. Princes pay flatterers In their own money. Flatterers dissemble their vices, And they dissemble their lies: that's justice. Alas, poor gentleman!

DUCHESS Poor? He hath amply filled his coffers.

BOSOLA Sure

He was too honest.

Let me show you what a most unvalued jewel You have, in a wanton humour, thrown away, To bless the man shall find him. He was an excellent Courtier and most faithful, a soldier that thought it As beastly to know his own value too little As devilish to acknowledge it too much. Both his virtue and form deserved a far better fortune. His breast was filled with all perfection, And yet it seemed a private whisp'ring-room, It made so little noise of 't.

DUCHESS

But he was basely descended.

BOSOLA Will you make yourself a mercenary herald, Rather to examine men's pedigrees than virtues? For know an honest statesman to a prince Is like a cedar, planted by a spring:
The spring bathes the tree's root, the grateful tree Rewards it with his shadow. You have not done so. I would sooner swim to the Bermudes on Two politicians' rotten bladders, tied Together with an intelligencer's heart-string, Than depend on so changeable a prince's favour. Fare thee well, Antonio; since the malice of the world Would needs down with thee, 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? Can this ambitious age Have so much goodness in 't as to prefer A man merely for worth, without these shadows Of wealth and painted honours? Possible?

DUCHESS I have had three children by him.

BOSOLA Fortunate lady!

For you have made your private nuptial bed The humble and fair seminary of peace. No question but many an unbeneficed scholar Shall pray for you for this deed, and rejoice That some preferment in the world can yet Arise from merit. The virgins of your land That have no dowries shall hope your example Will raise them to rich husbands. Should you want Soldiers, 'twould make the very Turks and Moors Turn Christians, and serve you for this act. The neglected poets of your time, In honour of this trophy of a man, Raised by that curious engine, your white hand, Shall thank you, in your grave, for 't. For Antonio, His fame shall likewise flow from many a pen, When heralds shall want coats to sell to men.

DUCHESS As I taste comfort in this friendly speech, So would I find concealment.

BOSOLA O, the secret of my prince, Which I will wear on th' inside of my heart.

DUCHESS You shall take charge of all my coin and jewels, And follow him, for he retires himself To Ancona.

BOSOLA So.

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

BOSOLA Let me think:
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, if you will believe me, I do not like this jesting with religion, This feigned pilgrimage. DUCHESS Thou art a superstitious fool. Prepare us instantly for our departure. Past sorrows, let us moderately lament them, For those to come, seek wisely to prevent them.

Exeunt 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 Ferdinand? O, this base quality Of intelligencer! Why, every quality i' th' world Prefers but gain or commendation. Now, for this act I am certain to be raised.

Exit

- INTERVAL -

3.3

Enter CARDINAL and MALATESTE, FERDINAND with DELIO and SILVIO, and PESCARA apart

CARDINAL Must I turn soldier then?

MALATESTE The Emperor,
Hearing your worth that way ere you attained
This reverend garment, joins you in commission
With the right fortunate soldier the Marquis of Pescara.
Here's a plot drawn for a new fortification at Naples.

They study the battle plans

FERDINAND This great Count Malateste, I perceive, Hath got employment?

DELIO No employment, my lord; A marginal note in the muster-book that he is A voluntary lord.

FERDINAND He's no soldier?

SILVIO He comes to the leaguer with a full intent To eat fresh beef and garlic, means to stay Till the scent be gone, and straight return to court.

DELIO He hath read all the late service As the City Chronicle relates it, And keeps two painters going only to express Battles in model.

SILVIO Then he'll fight by the book.

DELIO By the almanac, I think,

To choose good days and shun the critical. That's his mistress' scarf.

SILVIO Yes, he protests He would do much for that taffeta.

DELIO I think he would run away from a battle To save it from taking prisoner.

SILVIO He is horribly afraid Gunpowder will spoil the perfume on 't.

Enter BOSOLA who speaks to FERDINAND and the CARDINAL apart

PESCARA Bosola arrived! What should be the business? Some falling out amongst the princes? These factions amongst great men, they are like Foxes, when their heads are divided They carry fire in their tails, and all the country About them goes to wrack for 't.

SILVIO What's that Bosola?

DELIO I knew him in Padua: a fantastical scholar like such who study to know how many knots was in Hercules' club, what colour Achilles' beard was, or whether Hector were not troubled with the toothache; this he did to gain the name of a speculative man.

PESCARA Mark Prince Ferdinand, A very salamander lives in 's eye, To mock the eager violence of fire.

SILVIO That Cardinal hath made more bad faces with his oppression than ever Michaelangelo made good ones. He lifts up 's nose, like a foul porpoise before a storm.

PESCARA The Lord Ferdinand laughs.

DELIO Like a deadly cannon

That lightens ere it smokes.

PESCARA These are your true pangs of death, The pangs of life, that struggle with great statesmen.

DELIO In such a deformed silence witches whisper their charms.

The CARDINAL, FERDINAND and BOSOLA come forward

CARDINAL Doth she make religion her riding hood To keep her from the sun and tempest?

FERDINAND That.
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?
I shall not be at your ceremony; fare you well.
Antonio: a slave that only smelled of ink and counters,
And never in 's life looked like a gentleman,
But in the audit-time. Go, go presently,
Draw me out an hundred and fifty of our horse,
And meet me at the fort-bridge.

Exeunt

3.4

Enter Two Pilgrims to the Shrine of our Lady of Loretto

FIRST PILGRIM I have not seen a goodlier shrine than this, Yet I have visited many.

SECOND PILGRIM The Cardinal of Aragon Is this day to resign his cardinal's hat. His sister Duchess likewise is arrived To pay her vow of pilgrimage. I expect A noble ceremony.

FIRST PILGRIM No question. They come.

Here the ceremony of the CARDINAL's instalmen in the habit of a soldier, performed in delivering up his cross, hat, robes and ring, at the shrine, and investing him with sword, helmet, shield, and spurs. Then ANTONIO, the DUCHESS and their Children, having presented themselves at the shrine, are, by a form of banishment in dumb show expressed towards them by the CARDINAL and the state of Ancona, banished. During all which ceremony, this ditty is sung, to very solemn music, by divers churchmen; and then exeunt all except the Two Pilgrims.

CHURCHMEN Arms and honours deck thy story

To thy fame's eternal glory;
Adverse fortune ever fly thee,
No disastrous fate come nigh thee.
I alone will sing thy praises,
Whom to honour virtue raises;
And thy study that divine is,
Bent to martial discipline is.

Lay aside all those robes lie by thee,

Crown thy arts with arms, they'll beautify thee.

Exeunt

3.5

Enter DUCHESS, ANTONIO, CARIOLA, Children and Servants

DUCHESS Banished Ancona!

ANTONIO Yes, you see what power

Lightens in great men's breath.

DUCHESS Is all our train

Shrunk to this poor remainder?

ANTONIO Those poor men Which have got little in your service vow To take your fortune; but your wiser buntings, Now they are fledged, are gone.

DUCHESS I had a very strange dream tonight.

ANTONIO What was 't?

DUCHESS 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 i' th' field
On the wild benefit of nature, live
Happier than we; for they may choose their mates,
And carol their sweet pleasures to the spring.

Enter BOSOLA with a letter

BOSOLA You are happily o'erta'en.

DUCHESS From my brother?

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

DUCHESS Thou dost blanch mischief, Wouldst make it white. See, see, like to calm weather At sea before a tempest, false hearts speak fair To those they intend most mischief.

(Reads) 'Send Antonio to me; I want his head in a business.'
A politic equivocation! He doth not want your counsel, but your head:
That is, he cannot sleep till you be dead.
And here's another pitfall that's strewed o'er
With roses; mark it, 'tis a cunning one:

(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.

BOSOLA What do you believe?

DUCHESS That he so much distrusts my husband's love, He will by no means believe his heart is with him Until he see it. The devil is not cunning enough To circumvent us in riddles.

BOSOLA Will you reject that noble and free league Of amity and love which I present you?

DUCHESS Their league is like that of some politic kings:

Only to make themselves of strength and power To be our after-ruin. Tell them so.

BOSOLA And what from you?

ANTONIO Thus tell him: I will not come.

BOSOLA And what of this?

ANTONIO My brothers have dispersed Bloodhounds abroad; which till I hear are muzzled, No truce, though hatched with ne'er such politic skill, Is safe that hangs upon our enemies' will. I'll not come at them.

BOSOLA This proclaims your breeding. Every small thing draws a base mind to fear, As the adamant draws iron. Fare you well, sir, You shall shortly hear from us.

Exit

DUCHESS I suspect some ambush: Therefore, by all my love, I do conjure you To take our eldest son, and fly towards Milan. Let us not venture all this poor remainder In one unlucky bottom.

ANTONIO You counsel safely. Best of my life, farewell. Since we must part, Heaven hath a hand in 't; but no otherwise Than as some curious artist takes in sunder A clock or watch when it is out of frame, To bring 't in better order.

DUCHESS I know not which is best,
To see you dead, or part with you. (To son) Farewell, boy,
Thou art happy that thou hast not understanding
To know thy misery, for all our wit
And reading brings us to a truer sense
Of sorrow. In the eternal church, sir,
I do hope we shall not part thus.

ANTONIO O, be of comfort! Make patience a noble fortitude, And think not how unkindly we are used: Man, like to cassia, is proved best, being bruised.

DUCHESS Must I, like to slave-born Russian, Account it praise to suffer tyranny? And yet, O heaven, thy heavy hand is in 't! I have seen my little boy oft scourge his top, And compared myself to 't: naught made me e'er Go right but heaven's scourge-stick.

ANTONIO Do not weep: Heaven fashioned us of nothing, and we strive To bring ourselves to nothing. Farewell, Cariola, And thy sweet armful. (*To Duchess*) 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. Your kiss is colder Than that I have seen an holy anchorite Give to a dead man's skull.

ANTONIO My heart is turned to a heavy lump of lead, With which I sound my danger: fare you well.

Exeunt ANTONIO and his son

DUCHESS My laurel is all withered.

CARIOLA Look, madam, what a troop of armed men Make toward us.

Re-enter BOSOLA with a guard of soldiers, all wearing vizards

DUCHESS O, they are very welcome. When Fortune's wheel is over-charged with princes, The weight makes it move swift. I would have my ruin Be sudden. I am your adventure, am I not?

BOSOLA You are: you must see your husband no more.

DUCHESS What devil art thou that counterfeits heaven's thunder?

BOSOLA Is that terrible? I would have you tell me whether Is that note worse that frights the silly birds
Out of the corn, or that which doth allure them
To the nets? You have hearkened to the last too much.

DUCHESS O misery! Like to a rusty o'ercharged cannon, Shall I never fly in pieces? Come: to what prison?

BOSOLA To none.

DUCHESS Whither, then?

BOSOLA To your court.

DUCHESS I have heard

That Charon's boat serves to convey all o'er The dismal lake, but brings none back again.

BOSOLA 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.

BOSOLA These are your children?
DUCHESS Yes.

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 Were I a man, I'd beat that counterfeit face into thy other.

BOSOLA One of no birth.

DUCHESS Say that he was born mean: Man is most happy when 's own actions Be arguments and examples of his virtue.

BOSOLA A barren, beggarly virtue.

DUCHESS I prithee, who is greatest? Can you tell? Sad tales befit my woe: I'll tell you one. A salmon, as she swam unto the sea. Met with a dog-fish, who encounters her With this rough language: 'Why art thou so bold To mix thyself with our high state of floods. Being no eminent courtier, but one That for the calmest and fresh time o' th' year Dost live in shallow rivers, rank'st thyself With silly smelts and shrimps? And darest thou Pass by our dog-ship without reverence?' 'O,' quoth the salmon, 'sister, be at peace: Thank Jupiter we both have passed the net. Our value never can be truly known Till in the fisher's basket we be shown; I' th' market then my price may be the higher, Even when I am nearest to the cook and fire.' So to great men the moral may be stretched: Men oft are valued high, when they're most wretched. But 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

4.1

Enter FERDINAND and BOSOLA

FERDINAND How doth our sister Duchess bear herself In her imprisonment?

BOSOLA Nobly. I'll describe her:
She's sad as one long used to 't, and she seems
Rather to welcome the end of misery
Than shun it; a behaviour so noble
As gives a majesty to adversity.
You may discern the shape of loveliness
More perfect in her tears than in her smiles.
She will muse for hours together, and her silence,
Methinks, expresseth more than if she spake.

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

BOSOLA 'Tis so; and this restraint, Like English mastiffs that grow fierce with tying, Makes her too passionately apprehend Those pleasures she is kept from.

FERDINAND Curse upon her! I will no longer study in the book Of another's heart. Inform her what I told you.

Exit FERDINAND. Enter DUCHESS

BOSOLA All comfort to your grace.

DUCHESS I will have none. Pray thee, why dost thou wrap thy poisoned pills In gold and sugar?

BOSOLA Your brother, 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 i' th' night; And prays you, gently, neither torch nor taper Shine in your chamber. He will kiss your hand, And reconcile himself; but, for his vow, He dares not see you.

DUCHESS At his pleasure. Take hence the lights.

BOSOLA removes the lights and walks apart. Enter FERDINAND

He's come.

FERDINAND Where are you?

DUCHESS Here, sir.

FERDINAND This darkness suits you well.

DUCHESS I would ask you pardon.

FERDINAND You have it; For I account it the honorabl'st revenge, Where I may kill, to pardon. Where are your cubs?

DUCHESS Whom?

FERDINAND Call them your children, For though our national law distinguish bastards From true legitimate issue, compassionate nature Makes them all equal.

DUCHESS Do you visit me for this? You violate a sacrament o' th' church Shall make you howl in hell for 't.

FERDINAND It had been well, Could you have lived thus always; for indeed You were too much i' th' light. But no more, I come to seal my peace with you. Here's a hand To which you have vowed much love; the ring upon 't You gave.

Gives her a dead man's hand

DUCHESS I affectionately kiss it.

FERDINAND Pray, do, and bury the print of it in your heart. 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. When you need a friend, Send it to him that owed it; you shall see Whether he can aid you.

DUCHESS You are very cold. I fear you are not well after your travel. Ha? Lights!

BOSOLA brings up the lights

O horrible!

FERDINAND Let her have lights enough.

Exit

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

A curtain opens. Here is discovered, behind a traverse, the figures of ANTONIO and the children, appearing as if they were dead

BOSOLA Look you: here's the piece from which 'twas ta'en. He doth present you this sad spectacle, That, now you know directly they are dead, Hereafter you may wisely cease to grieve For that which cannot be recovered.

DUCHESS There is not between heaven and earth one wish I stay for after this. It wastes me more

Than were 't my picture, fashioned out of wax, Stuck with a magical needle, and then buried In some foul dunghill; and yon's an excellent property For a tyrant, which I would account mercy.

BOSOLA What's that?

DUCHESS If they would 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, In hell, that they must live, and cannot die. Portia, I'll new kindle thy coals again, And revive the rare and almost dead example Of a loving wife.

BOSOLA O fie! Despair? 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. The bee when he hath shot his sting into your hand May then play with your eyelid.

DUCHESS Good comfortable fellow, Persuade a wretch that's broke upon the wheel To have all his bones new set; entreat him live To be executed again. Who must despatch me? I account this world a tedious theatre, For I do play a part in 't 'gainst my will.

BOSOLA Now, by my life, I pity you.

DUCHESS

Thou art a fool then,
To waste thy pity on a thing so wretch'd
As cannot pity itself. I am full of daggers.

Puff! Let me blow these vipers from me.

Enter GRISOLAN

What are you?

GRISOLAN One that wishes you long life.

DUCHESS I would thou wert hanged for the horrible curse Thou hast given me.

Exit GRISOLAN

I shall shortly grow one Of the miracles of pity. I'll go pray; no I'll go curse.

BOSOLA O fie!

DUCHESS I could curse the stars.

BOSOLA O, fearful!

DUCHESS And those three smiling seasons of the year Into a Russian winter, nay, the world To its first chaos.

BOSOLA Look you, the stars shine still.

DUCHESS O, but you must

Remember, my curse hath a great way to go. Plagues, that make lanes through largest families, Consume them!

BOSOLA Fie, lady!

DUCHESS Let them, like tyrants, Never be remembered but for the ill they have done; Let all the zealous prayers of mortified Churchmen forget them!

BOSOLA O uncharitable!

DUCHESS Let heaven a little while cease crowning martyrs, To punish them! Go, howl them this, and say, I long to bleed: It is some mercy when men kill with speed.

Exit DUCHESS. Re-enter FERDINAND

FERDINAND Excellent, as I would wish; she's plagued in art. These presentations are but framed in wax By the curious master in that quality, Vincentio Lauriola, 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. Send her a penitential garment to put on Next to her delicate skin, and furnish her With beads and prayer-books.

FERDINAND Damn her! That body of hers, While that my blood run pure in 't, was more worth Than that which thou wouldst comfort, called a soul. And, 'cause she'll needs be mad, I am resolved To remove forth the common hospital All the mad-folk, and place them near her lodging; There let them practise together, sing and dance, And act their gambols to the full o' th' 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.

BOSOLA Never in mine own shape; That's forfeited by my intelligence, And this last cruel lie. When you send me next, The business shall be comfort.

FERDINAND Very likely.
Thy pity is nothing of kin to thee. Antonio
Lurks about Milan: thou shalt shortly thither
To feed a fire as great as my revenge,
Which ne'er will slack till it hath spent his fuel:
Intemperate agues make physicians cruel.

Exeunt

4.2

Enter DUCHESS and CARIOLA

DUCHESS What hideous noise was that?

CARIOLA 'Tis the wild consort Of madmen, lady, which your tyrant brother Hath placed about your lodging. This tyranny, I think, was never practised till this hour.

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 dismal tragedy.

CARIOLA O, 'twill increase your melancholy.

DUCHESS Thou art deceived: To hear of 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.

CARIOLA Pray, dry your eyes. What think you of, madam?

DUCHESS Of nothing: When I muse thus, I sleep.

CARIOLA Like a madman, with your eyes open?

DUCHESS Dost thou think we shall know one another In th' other world?

CARIOLA Yes, out of 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. Th' heaven o'er my head seems made of molten brass, The earth of flaming sulphur, yet I am not mad. 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. Who do I look like now?

CARIOLA Like to your picture in the gallery, A deal of life in show, but none in practice; Or rather like some reverend monument Whose ruins are even pitied.

DUCHESS Very proper; And Fortune seems only to have her eyesight To behold my tragedy. How now! What noise is that?

Enter GRISOLAN

GRISOLAN I am come to tell you 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, And so th' imposthume broke. The self-same cure The Duke intends on you.

DUCHESS Let them come in.

GRISOLAN There's a mad lawyer, and a secular priest, A doctor that hath forfeited his wits By jealousy; an astrologian That in his works said such a day o' th' month Should be the day of doom, and, failing of 't, Ran mad; an English tailor crazed i' the brain With the study of new fashions; a gentleman usher Quite beside himself with care to keep in mind The number of his lady's salutations; A farmer, too, an excellent knave in grain, Mad 'cause he was hindered transportation: And let one broker that's mad loose to these, You'd think the devil were among them.

DUCHESS Sit, Cariola. Let them loose when you please, For I am chained to endure all your tyranny.

Enter Madmen. Here by the Madmen this song is sung to a dismal kind of music

MADMEN 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 bill, and bawl our parts.

Till irksome noise have cloyed your ears

And corrosived your hearts.

At last, when as our choir wants breath,

Our bodies being blest,

We'll sing, like swans, to welcome death,

And die in love and rest.

MAD FARMER I cannot sleep, my pillow is stuffed with a litter of porcupines.

MAD PRIEST I will lie with every woman in my parish the tenth night; I will tithe them over, like haycocks.

MAD TAILOR I have skill in heraldry.

MAD LAWYER Hast?

MAD ASTROLOGER You do give for your crest a woodcock's head with the brains picked out on 't.

MAD DOCTOR If I had my glass here, I would show a sight should make all the women here call me mad doctor.

MAD ASTROLOGER (about MAD PREIST) What's he? A rope-maker?

MAD LAWYER No, no, no, a snuffling knave that, while he shows the tombs, will have his hand in a wench's placket.

MAD FARMER Get me three hundred milch-bats, to make possets to procure sleep.

BOSOLA, like an old man, enters and the Madmen leave

BOSOLA I am come to make thy tomb.

DUCHESS Ha, my tomb! Thou speak'st as if I lay upon my death-bed, 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, but a salvatory of green mummy. What's this flesh? A little curded milk, fantastical puff-paste; our bodies are weaker than those paper prisons boys use to keep flies in; more contemptible, since ours is to preserve earth-worms. Didst thou ever see a lark in a cage? Such is the soul in the body: this world is like her little turf of grass, and the heaven o'er

our heads like her looking-glass, only gives us a miserable knowledge of the small compass of our prison.

DUCHESS Am not I thy Duchess?

BOSOLA Thou art some great woman, sure, for riot begins to sit on thy forehead, clad in grey hairs, twenty years sooner than on a merry milkmaid's. Thou sleep'st worse than if a mouse should be forced to take up her lodging in a cat's ear: a little infant that breeds its teeth, should it lie with thee, would cry out, as if thou wert the more unquiet bedfellow.

DUCHESS I am Duchess of Malfi still.

BOSOLA That makes thy sleep so broken: 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 be a little merry: Of what stuff wilt thou make it?

BOSOLA Nay, resolve me first, of what fashion?

DUCHESS Why, do we grow fantastical on our deathbed?

Do we affect fashion in the grave?

BOSOLA Most ambitiously. Princes' images on their tombs do not lie, as they were wont, seeming to pray up to heaven, but with their hands under their cheeks as if they died of the toothache. They are not carved with their eyes fixed upon the stars, but as their minds were wholly bent upon the world, the selfsame way they turn their faces.

DUCHESS Let me know fully therefore the effect Of this thy dismal preparation. This talk fit for a charnel.

BOSOLA Now I shall. Here is a present from your princely brothers, And may it arrive welcome, for it brings Last benefit, last sorrow.

Enter Executioners with coffin, cords, and a bell

This is your last presence-

chamber.

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 Even now thou said'st

Thou wast a tomb-maker.

BOSOLA 'Twas to bring you By degrees to mortification. Listen:

BOSOLA rings the bell

Hark, now everything is still, The screech-owl and the whistler shrill Call upon our dame, aloud, And bid her quickly don her shroud. Much you had of land and rent, Your length in clay's now competent. A long war disturbed your mind, Here your perfect peace is signed. Of what is 't fools make such vain keeping? Sin their conception, their birth weeping; Their life a general mist of error. Their death a hideous storm of terror. Strew your hair with powders sweet, Don clean linen, bathe your feet, And, the foul fiend more to check. A crucifix let bless your neck. 'Tis now full tide 'tween night and day: End your groan, and come away.

Executioners approach

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

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

BOSOLA Remove that noise.

Executioners sieze CARIOLA

DUCHESS Farewell, Cariola. In my last will I have not much to give; Many hungry guests have fed upon me, Thine will be a poor reversion.

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.

Executioners force CARIOLA off

Now what you please:

What death?

BOSOLA Strangling: here are your executioners.

DUCHESS I forgive them: The apoplexy, catarrh, or cough o' th' lungs Would do as much as they do.

BOSOLA Doth not death fright you?

DUCHESS Who would be afraid on 't, Knowing to meet such excellent company In th' 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?
I know death hath ten thousand several doors
For men to take their exits; and 'tis found
They go on such strange geometrical hinges,
You may open them both ways. Tell my brothers
That I perceive death, now I am well awake,
Best gift is they can give or I can take.
I would fain put off my last woman's fault,
I'd not be tedious to you.

EXECUTIONER We are ready.

DUCHESS Dispose my breath how please you, but my body Bestow upon my women, will you?

EXECUTIONER Yes.

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

They strangle her

BOSOLA Where's the waiting-woman? Fetch her. Bring the children.

Executioners bring CARIOLA, and some go to strangle the children

Look you, there sleeps your mistress.

CARIOLA O, you are damned Perpetually for this. My turn is next, Is 't not so ordered?

BOSOLA Yes, and I am glad You are so well prepared for 't.

CARIOLA You are deceived sir, I am not prepared for 't, I will not die; I will first come to my answer, and know

How I have 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.

EXECUTIONER (showing the noose) Here's your wedding ring.

CARIOLA Let me but speak with the Duke. I'll discover

Treason to his person.

BOSOLA Delays: throttle her.

EXECUTIONER She bites, and scratches.

CARIOLA If you kill me now,

I am damned: I have not been at confession

This two years.

BOSOLA (hurrying executioners) When?

CARIOLA I am quick with child.

BOSOLA Why, then,

Your credit's saved.

Executioners strangle CARIOLA

Bear her into the next room;

Let this lie still. Kill the children.

Exeunt Executioners with the body of CARIOLA. Enter FERDINAND

FERDINAND Is she dead?

BOSOLA She is what

You'd have her. But here begin your pity:

BOSOLA draws a traverse and shows the children strangled

Alas, how have these offended?

FERDINAND The death

Of young wolves is never to be pitied.

BOSOLA Fix your eye here.

FERDINAND Constantly.

BOSOLA 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.

BOSOLA I think not so; her infelicity Seemed to have years too many.

FERDINAND She and I were twins; And should I die this instant, I had lived Her time to a minute.

BOSOLA It seems she was born first. You have bloodily approved the ancient truth, That kindred commonly do worse agree Than remote strangers.

FERDINAND 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! Or, bold in a good cause, opposed thyself, With thy advanced sword above thy head. Between her innocence and my revenge! I bade thee, when I was distracted of my wits, Go kill my dearest friend, and thou hast done 't. For let me but examine well the cause: 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; And that was the main cause. Her marriage, Drew a stream of gall guite through my heart. For thee (as we observe in tragedies That a good actor many times is cursed For playing a villain's part) I hate thee for 't.

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? Did a complete jury

Deliver her conviction up i' th' court?

Where shalt thou find this judgment registered,

Unless in hell? See: like a bloody fool

Thou 'st forfeited thy life, and thou shalt die for 't.

BOSOLA The office of justice is perverted quite When one thief hangs another. Who shall dare To reveal this?

FERDINAND O, 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 't.

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 O horror!
That not the fear of him which binds the devils
Can prescribe man obedience.
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; and your vengeance,
Like two chained bullets, still goes arm in arm.
I stand like one that long hath ta'en a sweet and golden dream:
I am angry with myself, now that I wake.

FERDINAND Get thee into some unknown part o' th' world, That I may never see thee.

BOSOLA Let me know Wherefore I should be thus neglected, sir. I served your tyranny, and rather strove To satisfy yourself than all the world; 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

BOSOLA Off, my painted honour! While with vain hopes our faculties we tire, We seem to sweat in ice and freeze in fire. What would I do, were this to do again? I would not change my peace of conscience For all the wealth of Europe. She stirs; here's life. Return, fair soul, from darkness, and lead mine Out of this sensible hell. She's warm, she breathes. Upon thy pale lips I will melt my heart

To store them with fresh colour. Her eye opes, And heaven in it seems to ope, that late was shut, To take me up to mercy.

DUCHESS Antonio.

BOSOLA Yes, madam, he is living. The dead bodies you saw were but feigned statues. He's reconciled to your brothers; the Pope hath wrought The atonement.

DUCHESS Mercy.

She dies

BOSOLA O, she's gone again; there the cords of life broke. O sacred innocence, that sweetly sleeps On turtles' feathers, whilst a guilty conscience Is a black register wherein is writ All our good deeds and bad, a perspective That shows us hell. That we cannot be suffered To do good when we have a mind to it! (He weeps) This is manly sorrow: These tears, I am very certain, never grew In my mother's milk. My estate is sunk Below the degree of fear. Where were These penitent fountains while she was living? O, they were frozen up. Here is a sight As direful to my soul as is the sword Unto a wretch hath slain his father. Come I'll bear thee hence, and execute thy last will: That's deliver thy body to the reverend dispose Of some good women; that the cruel tyrant Shall not deny me. Then I'll post to Milan Where somewhat I will speedily enact Worth my dejection.

Exit with the body

5.1

Enter ANTONIO and DELIO

ANTONIO What think you of my hope of reconcilement To the Aragonian brethren?

DELIO I misdoubt it,
For though they have sent their letters of safe conduct
For your repair to Milan, they appear
But nets to entrap you. The Marquis of Pescara,
Under whom you hold certain land in cheat,
Much 'gainst his noble nature hath been moved
To seize those lands, and some of his dependents
Are at this instant making it their suit
To be invested in your revenues.

Enter PESCARA

DELIO Here comes the Marquis. I will make myself Petitioner for some part of your land, To know whither it is flying.

ANTONIO I pray, do.

ANTONIO retires

DELIO Sir, I have a suit to you.

PESCARA To me?

DELIO An easy one.
There is the Citadel of Saint Benet,
With some demesnes, of late in the possession
Of Antonio Bologna; please you bestow them on me?

PESCARA You are my friend; but this is such a suit, Nor fit for me to give, nor you to take.

DELIO No, sir?

PESCARA I will give you ample reason for 't Soon in private.

Enter JULIA

Here's the Cardinal's mistress.

JULIA My lord, I am grown your poor petitioner, And should be an ill beggar, had I not A great man's letter here, the Cardinal's,

To court you in my favour.

Gives PESCARA a letter which he reads

PESCARA He entreats for you The Citadel of Saint Benet, that belonged To the banished Bologna.

JULIA Yes.

PESCARA I could not have thought of a friend I could Rather pleasure with it: 'tis yours.

JULIA Sir, I thank you; And he shall know how doubly I am engaged Both in your gift, and speediness of giving Which makes your grant the greater.

Exit JULIA

ANTONIO (aside) How they fortify

Themselves with my ruin!

DELIO Sir, I am

Little bound to you.

PESCARA Why?

DELIO Because you denied this suit to me, and gave 't To such a creature.

PESCARA. Do you know what it was? It was Antonio's land; not forfeited By course of law, but ravished from his throat By the Cardinal's entreaty. It were not fit I should bestow so main a piece of wrong Upon my friend; 'tis a gratification Only due to a strumpet, for it is injustice. I am glad This land, ta'en from the owner by such wrong, Returns again unto so foul a use As salary for his lust. Learn, good Delio, To ask noble things of me, and you shall find I'll be a noble giver.

DELIO You instruct me well.

ANTONIO (aside) Why, here's a man now would fright impudence From sauciest beggars.

PESCARA Duke Ferdinand's come to Milan Sick, as they give out, of an apoplexy, But some say 'tis a frenzy; I am going To visit him.

Exit PESCARA

ANTONIO 'Tis a noble old fellow.

DELIO What course do you mean to take, Antonio?

ANTONIO This night I mean to venture all my fortune, To the Cardinal's worst of malice. I have got Private access to his chamber, and intend To visit him about the mid of night, As once his brother did our noble Duchess.

It may be that the sudden apprehension, When he shall see me fraught with love and duty, May draw the poison out of him and work A friendly reconcilement.

DELIO I'll second you in all danger; and howe'er, My life keeps rank with yours.

Exeunt

5.3

Enter PESCARA and DOCTOR

PESCARA Now, doctor, may I visit your patient?

DOCTOR If 't please your lordship; but he's instantly To take the air here in the gallery By my direction.

PESCARA Pray thee, what's his disease?

DOCTOR A very pestilent disease, my lord, They call lycanthropia.

PESCARA What's that? I need a dictionary to 't.

DOCTOR I'll tell you.
In those that are possessed with 't there o'erflows
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; as two nights since
One met the Duke, 'bout midnight in a lane
Behind Saint Mark's church, with the leg of a man
Upon his shoulder; and he howled fearfully;
Said he was a wolf, only the difference
Was, a wolf's skin was hairy on the outside,
His on the inside. Soft, he comes.

Enter FERDINAND, CARDINAL, SILVIO and MALATESTE, and BOSOLA apart

FERDINAND Leave me.

SILVIO 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?

MALATESTE 'Tis your shadow.

FERDINAND Stay it, let it not haunt me.

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

FERDINAND I will throttle it.

Throws himself down on his shadow

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

FERDINAND You are a fool. How is 't possible I should catch my shadow, unless I fall upon 't? When I go to hell, I mean to carry a bribe; for, look you, good gifts evermore make way for the worst persons.

PESCARA Rise, good my lord.

FERDINAND I am studying the art of patience.

PESCARA '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 (the patient'st man i' th' world match me for an experiment) and I'll crawl after like a sheep-biter.

CARDINAL Force him up.

They raise him

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

DOCTOR Now let me come to him. Are you mad, my lord? Are you out of your princely wits?

FERDINAND What's he?

PESCARA Your doctor.

FERDINAND Let me have his beard sawed off, and his eye-brows filed more civil.

Hide me from him. Physicians are like kings, they brook no contradiction.

DOCTOR Now he begins to fear me, now let me alone with him.

FERDINAND tries to undress: the CARDINAL restrains him

CARDINAL How now, put off your gown?

DOCTOR Let him go, let him go, upon my peril. I find by his eye he stands in awe of me; I'll make him as tame as a dormouse.

CARDINAL releases FERDINAND

FERDINAND (*lunging for the DOCTOR*) I will stamp you into a cullis and flay off your skin. Hence, hence! You are all of you like beasts for sacrifice, there's nothing left of you but tongue and belly, flattery and lechery.

Exit FERDINAND

PESCARA Doctor, he did not fear you thoroughly.

DOCTOR True, I was somewhat too forward.

Exit DOCTOR

BOSOLA (aside) Mercy upon me, what a fatal judgment Hath fallen upon this Ferdinand!

PESCARA Knows your grace What accident hath brought unto the prince This strange distraction?

CARDINAL (aside) I must feign somewhat. (To them) Thus they say it grew: You have heard it rumoured, for these many years, None of our family dies but there is seen The shape of an old woman, which is given By tradition to us to have been murdered By her nephews, for her riches. Such a figure One night, as the Duke sat up late at 's book, Appeared to him, since which apparition, He hath grown worse and worse.

BOSOLA (to CARDINAL) Sir, I would speak with you.

PESCARA We'll leave your grace,

Wishing to the sick prince, our noble lord, All health of mind and body.

CARDINAL You are most welcome.

Exeunt PESCARA, SILVIO and MALATESTE

Are you come? So; (aside) this fellow must not know By any means I had intelligence In our Duchess' death; for, though I counselled it, The full of all th' engagement seemed to grow From Ferdinand. (To him) Now, sir, how fares our sister? I do not think but sorrow makes her look Like to an oft-dyed garment. She shall now Take comfort from me. Why do you look so wildly? O, the fortune of your master here, the Duke 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 o'er his bones, I'd make you what you would be.

BOSOLA Anything; Give it me in a breath, and let me fly to 't. They that think long, small expedition win, For musing much o' th' end cannot begin.

Enter JULIA

JULIA Sir, will you come into supper?

CARDINAL I am busy, leave me.

JULIA (aside) What an excellent shape hath that fellow!

Exit JULIA

CARDINAL 'Tis thus. Antonio lurks here in Milan;

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 But by what means shall I find him out?

CARDINAL There is a gentleman called Delio Here in the camp, that hath been long approved His loyal friend. Set eye upon that fellow, Follow him to mass; maybe Antonio, Although he do account religion But a school-name, for fashion of the world May accompany him; or else go inquire out Delio's confessor, and see if you can bribe Him to reveal it.

BOSOLA Well, I'll not freeze i' th' business; I would see that wretched thing, Antonio, Above all sights i' th' world.

CARDINAL Do, and be happy.

Exit CARDINAL

BOSOLA This fellow doth breed basilisks in 's 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 So, sir, you are well met.

BOSOLA How now?

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 Why should I fall in love with such a face else? I suffer for thee so much pain, The only remedy to do me good Is to kill my longing.

BOSOLA Sure, your pistol holds Nothing but perfumes or kissing-comfits. Excellent lady, you have a pretty way on 't to discover Your longing. Come, come, I'll disarm you, And arm you thus (embraces her); yet this is wondrous strange.

JULIA Compare thy form and my eyes together, You'll find my love no such great miracle. 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 her) Let us grow most amorously familiar. 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 i' th' stone, but in me the thief
That purloins it. I am sudden with you;
We that are great women of pleasure use to cut off
These uncertain wishes and unquiet longings,
And in an instant join the sweet delight
And the pretty excuse together. 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; discover the main ground on 't.

JULIA Why would you know this?

BOSOLA I have depended on him, And I hear that he is fallen in some disgrace With the Emperor. If he be, like the mice That forsake falling houses, I would shift To other dependence. Will you do this?

JULIA Cunningly.

BOSOLA Tomorrow I'll expect th' intelligence.

JULIA Tomorrow? Get you into my cabinet, You shall have it with you now. O not delay me, No more than I do you. I am like one That is condemned: I have my pardon promised, But I would see it sealed. Go, get you in, You shall see my wind my tongue about his heart, Like a skein of silk.

BOSOLA withdraws. Re-enter CARDINAL

CARDINAL Where are you? (Aside) Yon's my lingering consumption. I am weary of her, and by any means Would be quit of her.

JULIA How now, my lord?

What ails you?

CARDINAL Nothing.

JULIA O, you are much altered. Come, I must be your secretary, and remove This lead from off your bosom: 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? Or do you suspect I, that have been a secret to your heart These many winters, cannot be the same Unto your tongue?

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

JULIA If that you be true unto yourself, I'll know.

CARDINAL Will you rack me?

JULIA No, judgment shall Draw it from you. It is an equal fault To tell one's secrets unto all or none.

CARDINAL The first argues folly.

JULIA But the last tyranny.

CARDINAL Very well. Why, imagine I have committed Some secret deed, which I desire the world May never hear of.

JULIA Therefore may not I know it? You have concealed for me as great a sin

As adultery. Sir, never was occasion For perfect trial of my constancy Till now. Sir, I beseech you.

CARDINAL You'll repent it.

JULIA Never.

CARDINAL It hurries thee to ruin. I'll not tell thee. Be well advised, and think what danger 'tis To receive a prince's secrets: they that do Had need have their breasts hooped with adamant To contain them. I pray thee yet be satisfied. 'Tis more easy to tie knots than unloose them.

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 O heaven! Sir, what have you done?

CARDINAL How now? How settles this? 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 't upon this book.

JULIA Most religiously.

CARDINAL Kiss it.

She kisses the book

Now you shall never utter it; thy curiosity

Hath undone thee. Thou 'rt poisoned with that book.

I have bound thee to 't by death.

Re-enter BOSOLA

BOSOLA For pity' sake, hold!

CARDINAL Ha, Bosola!

JULIA I forgive you

This equal piece of justice you have done, For I betrayed your counsel to that fellow.

BOSOLA O 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 Very well; Now you know me for your fellow murderer. I'll have thee hewed in pieces.

BOSOLA Make not yourself such a promise of that life Which is not yours to dispose of.

CARDINAL No more; there is a fortune attends thee.

BOSOLA Shall I go sue to Fortune any longer? 'Tis the fool's pilgrimage.

CARDINAL I have honours in store for thee.

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

CARDINAL Throw to the devil
Thy melancholy. The fire burns well,
What need we keep a stirring of 't, and make
A greater smother? Thou wilt kill Antonio?

BOSOLA Yes.

CARDINAL Take up that body.

BOSOLA I think I shall Shortly grow the common bier for churchyards.

CARDINAL No, come to me after midnight, to help to remove that body To her own lodging then. I'll give out she died o' th' plague; 'Twill breed the less inquiry after her death.

BOSOLA Where 's Castruccio, her husband?

CARDINAL He's rode to Naples to take possession Of Antonio's citadel. Fail not to come. There is the master-key Of our lodgings; and by that you may conceive What trust I plant in you.

BOSOLA You shall find me ready.

Exit CARDINAL

O poor Antonio, though nothing be so needful To thy estate as pity, yet I find Nothing so dangerous. I must look to my footing. In such slippery ice-pavements men had need To be frost-nailed well; they may break their necks else. The precedent's here afore me: how this man Bears up in blood! Seems fearless! Why, 'tis well: Well, good 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. Still me thinks the Duchess haunts; there, there 'Tis nothing but my melancholy O penitence, let me truly taste thy cup, That throws men down only to raise them up!

Exit

5.3

Enter ANTONIO and DELIO

DELIO Yon 's the Cardinal's window. This fortification Grew from the ruins of an ancient abbey, And to yond side lies a wall, A cloister, which in my opinion Gives the best echo that you ever heard, So hollow and so dismal, and withal 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.
And, questionless, here in this open court,
Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of weather, some men lie interred
Loved the church so well, and gave so largely to 't,
They thought it should have canopied their bones
Till doomsday. But all things have their end:
Churches and cities, which have diseases like to men,
Must have like death that we have.

ECHO Like death that we have.

DELIO Now the echo hath caught you. I told you 'twas a pretty one. You may make it a huntsman, or a falconer, a musician, Or a thing of sorrow.

ECHO A thing of sorrow.

ANTONIO Ay, sure: that suits it best.

ECHO That suits it best.

ANTONIO 'Tis very like my wife's voice.

ECHO

Ay, wife's voice.

DELIO Come, let us walk further from 't. I would not have you go to the Cardinal's tonight: Do not.

ECHO Do not.

ANTONIO

Necessity compels me.

Make scrutiny through the passages

Of your own life, you'll find it impossible

To fly your fate.

ECHO O, fly your fate!

DELIO 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 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 Never see her more.

ANTONIO Come, I'll be out of this ague, For to live thus is not indeed to live: It is a mockery and abuse of life. I will not henceforth save myself by halves; Lose all, or nothing.

DELIO Your own virtue save you! I'll fetch your eldest son, and second you. It may be that the sight of his own blood Spread in so sweet a figure may beget The more compassion.

ANTONIO Fare you well. Though in our miseries Fortune have a part, Yet in our noble sufferings she hath none. Contempt of pain, that we may call our own.

Exeunt

5.4

Enter CARDINAL, PESCARA, MALATESTE and SILVIO

CARDINAL You shall not watch tonight by the sick Duke. His grace is very well recovered.

MALATESTE So, sir; we shall not.

CARDINAL Nay, I must have you promise

Upon your honours, for I was enjoined to 't By himself; and he seemed to urge it sensibly.

SILVIO Let our honours bind this trifle.

CARDINAL It may be, to make trial of your promise, When he's asleep, myself will rise and feign Some of his mad tricks, and cry out for help, And feign myself in danger.

MALATESTE If your throat were cutting, I'd not come at you, now I have protested against it.

CARDINAL Why, I thank you.

Exeunt all except the CARDINAL

CARDINAL 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 fetch the body. When he hath served my turn,
He dies.

Exit CARDINAL. Enter BOSOLA

BOSOLA Ha? 'Twas the Cardinal's voice. I heard him name Bosola and my death.

Enter ANTONIO and Servant

SERVANT Here stay, sir, and be confident, I pray. I'll fetch you a dark lantern.

Exit Servant

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

BOSOLA Fall right, my sword!

Stabs him

I'll not give thee so much leisure as to pray.

ANTONIO O, I am gone! Thou hast ended a long suit in a minute.

BOSOLA What art thou?

ANTONIO A most wretched thing, That only have the benefit in death, To appear myself.

Re-enter Servant with a lantern

SERVANT Where are you, sir?

ANTONIO Very near my home. Bosola?

SERVANT O, misfortune!

BOSOLA Smother thy pity, thou art dead else. Antonio! The man I would have saved 'bove mine own life! We are merely the stars' tennis-balls, struck and banded Which way please them. 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 't in sadness. I would not now
Wish my wounds balmed nor healed, for I have no use
To put my life to. In all our quest of greatness,
Like wanton boys whose pastime is their care,
We follow after bubbles blown in th' air.
Pleasure of life, what is 't? Only the good hours
Of an ague; merely a preparative to rest,
To endure vexation. I do not ask
The process of my death; only commend me
To Delio.

BOSOLA Break, heart!

ANTONIO And let my son fly the courts of princes.

ANTONIO dies

BOSOLA Thou seem'st to have loved Antonio?

SERVANT I brought him hither,

To have reconciled him to the Cardinal.

BOSOLA I do not ask thee that. Take him up, if thou tender thine own life, O, my fate moves swift!
I have this Cardinal in the forge already,
Now I'll bring him to th' hammer.
(To Servant) On, on, and look thou represent, for silence,
The thing thou bear'st.

Exeunt, with the Servant carrying ANTONIO's body

5.5

Enter CARDINAL, with a book

CARDINAL I am puzzled in a question about hell. He says, in hell there's one material fire, And yet it shall not burn all men alike. Lay him by. How tedious is a guilty conscience! When I look into the fishponds in my garden,

Methinks I see a thing armed with a rake, That seems to strike at me.

Enter BOSOLA, and Servant bearing ANTONIO'S body

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 Ha? 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!

Enter, above, PESCARA, MALATESTE and SILVIO

MALATESTE Listen.

CARDINAL My dukedom for rescue!

SILVIO Fie upon his counterfeiting!

PESCARA Why, 'tis not the Cardinal?

SILVIO Yes, yes, 'tis he,

CARDINAL Here's a plot upon me; I am assaulted! I am lost, Unless some rescue!

SILVIO He doth this pretty well;

MALATESTE But it will not serve to laugh me out of mine honour.

CARDINAL The sword's at my throat!

MALATESTE You would not bawl so loud then.

SILVIO Let's go to bed: he told us this much aforehand.

PESCARA The accent of the voice sounds not in jest. I'll down to him.

Exit PESCARA

SILVIO Let's follow him aloof,

MALATESTE And note how the Cardinal will laugh at him.

Exeunt all above

BOSOLA There's for you first,

He kills the Servant

'Cause you shall not unbarricade the door To let in rescue.

CARDINAL 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 killed'st thy sister, Thou took'st from Justice her most equal balance, And left her naught but her sword.

CARDINAL O, mercy!

BOSOLA Now it seems thy greatness was only outward, For thou fall'st faster of thyself than calamity Can drive thee. I'll not waste longer time; there!

Stabs him

CARDINAL Thou hast hurt me.

BOSOLA Again!

Stabs him again

CARDINAL Shall I die like a leveret,

Without any resistance? Help, help, help!

Enter FERDINAND

FERDINAND Th' alarum! Give me a fresh horse: Rally the vanguard, or the day is lost. (*Threatens the Cardinal*) Yield, yield! I give you the honour of arms, Shake my sword over you, will you yield?

CARDINAL Help me, I am your brother.

FERDINAND The devil?

My brother fight upon the adverse party?

There flies your ransom.

He stabs the CARDINAL, and, in the scuffle, gives BOSOLA his death-wound

CARDINAL O Justice! I suffer now for what hath former been: Sorrow is held the eldest child of sin.

FERDINAND The pain's nothing; pain many times is taken away with the apprehension of greater, as the tooth-ache with the sight of a barber that comes to pull it out. There's philosophy for you.

BOSOLA Now my revenge is perfect.

He kills FERDINAND

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. I do account this world but a dog-kennel: I will vault credit, and affect high pleasures Beyond death.

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

FERDINAND 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 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 PESCARA, MALATESTE and SILVIO

PESCARA How now, my lord?

MALATESTE O sad disaster!

SILVIO How comes this?

BOSOLA Revenge, for the Duchess of Malfi murdered By th' 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 i' the end Neglected.

PESCARA How now, my lord?

CARDINAL Look to my brother: He gave us these large wounds, as we were struggling Here i' th' rushes. And now, I pray, let me Be laid by, and never thought of.

The CARDINAL dies

PESCARA How fatally, it seems, he did withstand His own rescue!

MALATESTE Thou wretched thing of blood, 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 dead walls or vaulted graves, That, ruined, yield 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. Enter DELIO with ANTONIO's son

MALATESTE O sir, you come too late!

DELIO

Let us make noble use
Of this great ruin; and join all our force
To establish this young hopeful gentleman
In 's mother's right. These wretched eminent things
Leave no more fame behind 'em, 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. I have ever thought
Nature doth nothing so great for great men
As when she's pleased to make them lords of truth:
Integrity of life is fame's best friend,
Which nobly, beyond death, shall crown the end.

Exeunt