

PORZIA

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# PORZIA

BY  
CALE YOUNG RICE

AUTHOR OF

"A NIGHT IN AVIGNON," "YOLANDA OF CYPRUS," "CHARLES DI  
TOCCA," "DAVID," "MANY GODS," "NIRVANA DAYS,"  
"FAR QUESTS," "THE IMMORTAL LURE," ETC.



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To  
GILBERT MURRAY  
*Poet, Dramatist, and Master-Interpreter of a great  
literature*

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## PREFACE

Some years ago while writing "A Night In Avignon" the thought came to me of framing two other plays that should deal respectively with the Renaissance spirit at its height and decadence, as that play had dealt with it at its beginning. For the great human upheaval that came intoxicatingly to Italy during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is so full of æsthetic contrast and glamor as to be peculiarly suitable for the doubly exacting purposes of poetic drama.

"Giorgione," the second of these plays to be written, was published in 1911 with three other plays in a volume entitled "The Immortal Lure," and like "A Night In Avignon" was received with such kindness as to encourage me to write the third, here presented under the name of "Porzia."

This last play, whose period is that of "decadent Humanism," or as Symonds prefers to call it, of "The Catholic Reaction," is laid in Naples, where the passions of men, more than freed from the long domination of the Church and the Hereafter, seemed to reach in their grasp at this life almost incredible heights and depths of excess. And yet from amid this excess, as from a rank and unweeded garden, were springing into flower many seeds of modern intellectual enfranchisement, as the achievements of Bruno and his contemporaries witness.

I need only add that I have sought to use materials that would be true to the time of this final portrayal, and that I therefore trust it may be understood as an organic member of the group to which it belongs.

C. Y. R.

Louisville, Kentucky, June, 1912.



## ACT I

## CHARACTERS

- RIZZIO DI ROSSI . . . . *A young Leader of the Literati at  
Naples, suspected of heresy*
- OSIO . . . . . *His Brother*
- PORZIA . . . . . *His Wife*
- ALOYSIUS . . . . . *Her Uncle, a Physician*
- BIANCA . . . . . *Her Cousin, a Florentine, once  
betrothed to Osio*
- GIORDANO BRUNO . . . *A young Dominican, also heretical*
- MONSIGNOR QUERIO . . *An Officer of the Inquisition*
- TASSO . . . . . *A Poet*
- MARINA . . . . . *A Sicilian serving Porzia*
- MATTEO . . . . . *Serving Rizzio, later Osio*
- Dancers from Capri, Musicians, Guards of the Inquisition, etc.*

TIME — About 1570

## PORZIA

SCENE: *A portion of the house, terrace and garden of Rizzio on his wedding day at Naples. It is so situated as to command a view of the city, the blue Bay with Capri set like a topaz in it, the Vesuvian coast, and the Mountain itself — rising like a calm though unappeasable monitor against the land's too sensual enchantment.*

*The house, a white corner of which is visible along the right, has large doors toward the back giving upon the terrace. A vine-clad terrace wall, several feet above the level of the terrace, but much above that of the street without, runs across the rear to a cypress-set gate in the centre, and on into the lustrous Spring foliage of illex, myrtle and orange.*

*A pedestaled image of the Virgin against the*

*house, a statue of Pan before a bower opposite, and several stone seats forward, are decked with orange blossoms that glow in the light of late afternoon.*

*Music, reveling, and laughter are heard, muffled, within. Then amid a louder burst of them Osio strides angrily forth. He is followed in argumentative elation by Rizzio -- clothed in Greek raiment, a book in his hand -- and by Bruno.*

*Osio (as they come down).* Proof from the  
teeth of aliens and fools

And infidels that follow their own reason?

I want no proof! your books should burn in Hell!

*Rizzio (gaily).* Because they glorify the stars  
in heaven?

*Osio.* I say they are heresy!

*Rizzio.*

And I say truth!

*[Uplifts volume.*

That were your ears not stopped with sophistries

And Jesuitry you would adjudge divine!

*[Tosses it down.]*

*Bruno.* Ai, Signor Osio, there's no denying!

*[Porzia appears anxiously at the door.]*

We need but look,

To learn that stars are worlds

Swung out upon infinitudes of space.

And as for earth —

Tho Christ shed blood upon it —

'Tis but a pilgrim flame among them all.

*[Porzia leaves door.]*

*Osio (turning upon him).* And you, a monk,  
will say so to the Church

And to the Holy Office?

*Bruno (in humorous alarm).* God forbid!

*Osio.* And you, Rizzio, who on your wedding-  
day,

Mid rites of Venus

And revels to Apollo,

Wear pagan robes — and prink others in them —

*Rizzio.* Ho, others! meaning Porzia?

*Osio.* I say — [*Mirth within.*

*Rizzio (laughing at him).* What, what, my merry  
raging brother, more?

That Pan is not your god, whom I but now  
Besought for inward beauty and truth of soul?

No, no, he is not, by Vesuvius!

*Osio.* I say —

*Rizzio.* That Plato and the ancients are  
A plague which only the Pope can purge from earth?

[*Again laughing.*

Ai! to the flames with them, and with all fairness!

*Osio.* I say that you —

*Rizzio.* Hey, yea! that I who fall  
Not on my knees to mitred villainy —  
Or cringe to crosiered craft —  
And yet whose life is lit for truth and freedom —  
Am viler far than you  
Who take your pleasure and pay it with confession?  
Who think the Devil with faith would be no Devil?

[*Porzia again appears with Bianca.*

You hear it, Bruno?

*Osio:* I say there is one thing  
You shall not do!

*Rizzio.* So-ho! my lordly brother,  
My breaker of betrothals — if not creeds —  
And that is what?

*Osio.* I will protect her from it!

*Rizzio.* Her?

*Osio.* Porzia! from the passion of your lies!

*[Astonishment.*

*Rizzio (stung, staring).* By . . . all the saints and  
fiends and incubi

That ever infested night and nunneries!  
What frenzy now is biting at your brain!

*[Before him.*

Is she your wife, so to concern your care?

*[They face, pale.*

*Porzia (who sees, and with Bianca comes quickly,  
winningly down).*

Heresy! heresy! truth and heresy!  
Are there no other words in all the world  
To pour as wine

Upon a wedding-day! —  
 Are these your ways, my newly wedded lord,  
 To leave me, an hour's bride, away from home —  
 From my dear uncle's home —  
 With but a friend or two for comforting —  
 And bandy words of other stars than those  
 You swear to see when gazing in my eyes!

*Rizzio (responsively).* My Porzia!

*Porzia.* No, no! I'll not forgive you!  
 For is it not ill boding to our bridals  
 You quarrel over the heavens — and not me!

[*As he laughs.*

My beauty, he says, this husband I have taken,  
 Is life — and yet ere 'tis an hour his  
 Forgets to live on it! — and Osio,  
 The brother of him, —  
 E'en Osio there —

*Rizzio (gay again).* Who swears he will protect  
 you!

[*Osio starts.*

*Porzia.* Protect?



*Rizzio.*                   Against the heresy of robes  
Of pagan fashion — and against your husband!

[*Constraint. Porzia sees Bianca flush.*

*Porzia.* I do not understand — unless you jest,  
As oft — too oft you do!

Or mean perchance Bianca . . . unto whom  
He was betrothed

And whom he would, this breath,

Be wooing again, were *I*, not *words*, your bride!

[*Then winningly again, as Marina enters.*

But see, here is Marina! the dance awaits!

[*Music is heard.*

Let us go in and give ourselves to Joy,  
For Misery is quick enough to take us,  
If first we do not wed us to her rival!

Is it not so?

*Rizzio (with passion).* Or sun has never shone!  
So in! the tarantelle! (*as Tasso enters*) And then  
a song

From Messer Tasso, who would be divine,

[*Greets him.*

Did he love Venus as he fears the Church,  
 Apollo as he shuns the Inquisition!  
 In! — Osio, will you come?

*Osio.*            I will not.

*Rizzio.*                            Then

Dance with your own mad humors and delusions  
 Here to Vesuvius and to the sea,—  
 Or to Bianca plead your pardon!

*(To the rest)* Come!

*[Seizes blossoms blithely.*

For in this world there's but one heresy,  
 Denial of the divinity of Joy!

*[Throws sprays over Porzia, takes her hand  
 and they go singing. All follow, but  
 Osio and Bianca.*

*Osio (when their steps have died; in cold rage).*  
 You shall hear more of this, my pretty brother!  
 Prater of pagan doubts!  
 Whom — but that God may use it — I would curse  
 For the resemblance that our mother gave us!  
 For, by the living blood of San Gennaro,

In yon Duomo, the scoffing siren song  
 Of heresy that swells in you shall cease,  
 Tho it shall take the sweat of the rack to hush it!  
 You shall hear more! . . .

*Bianca (who has stood long indignant).* And  
 others shall hear more!

*[Her voice breaking as she turns on him.*

Others who fix upon me this affront  
 Of broken and humiliate betrothals!

*[As he attempts to speak.*

Yes! you have made of me a thing of shame  
 Here in the eyes  
 Of those who're alien to me!  
 That you have loved me not — or love me less  
 Than once you did, too well I came to know —  
 I — with the blood in me of the Medici! —  
 And now it is open prate! . . . But do you  
 think

The women of my city want resentment,  
 Or less than these sun-lusting ones of Naples  
 Know how to cool their wrath?

*Osio.* I think you mad —  
 In a mad maze —  
 And yield it no concern;  
 Nor shall — (*meaningly*) until a thing you know is  
 done.

As to betrothals, give your memory breath:  
 Ours was agreed to end as either willed.

[*Goes from her to gate and looks expectantly out.*

*Bianca* (*as he returns*). And you, weary of it,  
 have utterly  
 Chosen to end it? [Sits.

*Osio:* Have I so affirmed?

*Bianca* (*springing up*). I will not have evasions,

*Osio!*

Shiftings and turnings

Radiant of hopes

That torture expectation till it breaks.

[*Again sitting.*

And yet — perchance it is as well they come

Now . . . while there yet is time for *more* with-  
 draws.

*Osio (startling).* More?

*Bianca.* For — I fear all trust in you is folly;  
 And that the heresy of Rizzio  
 Which I agreed with you to take unto  
 Monsignor Querio —

*Osio (clenching).* Shall not be taken?

*[She rises.*

Not! but you leave the brunt to me alone?

*Bianca.* You purpose more, I think, than to  
 restrain him.

*Osio.* And you more than abjuring! You would  
 gaze

Upon his godless schisms, . . .

Upon the naked luring of his lies!

*Bianca.* No! Tho the beauty of them —

*Osio.* Beauty! beauty!

*[Striking the Pan near him.*

That wind of infidelity from Hell

He blows out of his lips do you call beauty!

No! — and he with his poets and philosophers,

His Platos

And star-mad Copernicas,  
 And that Dominican, Giordano Bruno,  
 For whom the stake to flames will yet be lit,  
 Shall learn you are too late in your relenting!

*Bianca (stricken).* Too . . . late!

*Osio.* His heresies shall reap their due.

*Bianca (death-pale).* Which means — that you  
 already have revealed them!

Have sent unto Monsignor Querio

To-day —

Rizzio's wedding-day! —

For that

It was you sought out Matteo, who, pledged

Unto Marina,

As were you to me,

Has broke his troth? . . .

And now, now you await him? — O was not

Your promise to me that a week should pend

Ere any step?

*Osio.* I will not lose my soul, [Turns away.

And dallying is the feebleness of fools.

*Bianca.* And will lies save it — tho they be for  
Heaven! —

To one who nigh has lost her soul for you?

*[When he does not answer, more penetratively.]*

We have been friends, Osio, long been friends,  
And, woman that I am, I would 'twere more,  
But in this I suspect —

*Osio.*

Enough! we prate!

*[Rankling, uneasily.]*

I say enough.

*Bianca.*

And I say all too little,

*[Bitterly.]*

Until I tell you now plain to your face,  
And to your heart  
Plunging toward this passion,  
That not alone a hate of heresy  
Is haunting you to it, but that the lips  
And eyes and brows and soul of —

*Osio.*

Will you cease!

*Bianca.* I tell you that you love her — Porzia!  
And veer but to the vision of her face!

*Osio (who after strangling silence finds words).*

If you say that, Bianca, ever again  
Or if, by all the demons that Avernus  
Pours out upon the black Phlegræan fields,  
You hint it or suggest it to her, till —

*Bianca.* Till you achieve her! and have wrapped  
the rites

Of the Church round your achieving?  
Till you have severed her from Rizzio —  
Have swept her from perdition —  
Into your swathing arms! I say you shall not!  
Me you have set aside, but there an end!

*[Starts toward door.*

*Osio.* Stop! whither do you go?

*Bianca.* To call them! call!

And to betray your treachery — and mine!

*[Calling.*

Rizzio! Porzia! Rizzio!

*Osio.* Maledictions! *[Seizing her wrists.*

Will you become a dagger, and not know,  
Stiletto that you are, what thing you stab!



*Bianca.* The infatuation festering within you!  
Till, deaf with the desire of it and dream,  
You cannot tell their voice from Deity's.

[*Calls again.*

Rizzio! Porzia! Tasso!

[*The music ceases.*

*Rizzio (within; startled).* It was Bianca!  
[*Hastening to door with the rest crowding closely after.*  
How? what? you called? what moves you? — Osio?

[*Looks around.*

Was some one here? what is it? speak! . . . Bianca?  
What burns you?

*Bianca.* You shall hear! It must be told.  
Yes, yes! . . . (*Struggling to say it*) . . .  
And with no leavening delay of words.  
We . . . I . . . You must be gone from here at  
once;

At once — for there is peril.

*Rizzio.* Pah-ho! peril?  
Now, Scylla and the Sibyl and Charybdis!  
What megrim have you had?



*Rizzio (with laughing relief).* Now, now, do you  
not see your apprehension!

Is Matteo the Inquisition! Is  
He then the prison that has come to seize me?  
Fie, fie, Bianca, with your fears that mar  
Again the bridal beauty of this hour,  
And crowd with quiverings the bliss of it!  
No more of them! — (*to dancers*) Hither! and wind  
your maze!

Again take up the dance!

*Porzia.* No, Rizzio, no!

For now delight would die under our feet,  
And we but trample on it! No! Dismiss them  
Back now to Capri! . . .  
More than the woman fear within me warns it.  
For you have been o'er bold — not vainly, nay,  
For truth, I know, must dare — but there may be  
More in this than you think.

*Rizzio.* And ere it rises

I cravenly must quench the altar-fires  
That I attend — and our half-wedded joys?

No! no! More revels!

Till we shall utterly uncloud our bliss

And leave remembrance not a stain upon it!

A song, Tasso, a song!

The taunting one that swept us into laughter!

How runs it? did it not begin with Naples?

*(Recalls it.)*

Naples sins and Torre pays,

*(Torre del Greco!)*

Who fears the earthquake all her days!

*(Torre del Greco!)*

Who . . . .

*[Forgets.]*

Who sits beneath Vesuvius

And shrives the castaways of us!

Naples sins and Torre pays,

*(Torre del Greco!)*

On, on with it! Come Porzia! — On, on.

*Tasso (who has stood shrinking).* Ah, Signor, no; I

fear; I cannot; pray

Your pardon. I must go.

*Rizzio.* Go!

*Tasso.* I would not  
Offend the Church — who is the Bride of Christ.

*Rizzio (unaffected).* Then off with you, unworthy follower

Of Virgil,  
And of fire-veined Ariosto, —  
Of singers who have flung their hearts to courage,  
As yet we shall fling ours! (*Tasso goes.*) For even

Bianca

And Osio

Must rue now their alarm,

And help us back from it to revelry.

[*As he turns to them, then to all.*]

What, none of you? no heart of joy about me?

*Porzia (striving for abandon).* Yes, Rizzio! . . .

tho I would have you fly;

For bodingly I breathe the breath of evil!

[*With forced lightness.*]

A dance, then!

Again weave its delight!

[*Dancers show cheer.*]

For to your want mine is attuned, and what  
 Is music to it shall o'ermaster me!  
 And not alone my feet shall follow, but  
 The Truth you fly to will I wing to attain! —  
 Tho stars seem to my simple sight but candles  
 Upon the altar of God, I'll think them worlds,  
 If to your soul they seem so; and for the rest —

*[A knock brings consternation, this time to all.  
 The dancers fall to crossing themselves,  
 some kneeling. As they do so the gate  
 is thrown open and Querio enters; he is  
 followed by several guards.]*

*Querio (advancing; amid awe).* In the name of  
 the Vicar of God who sits at Rome,  
 And of the Holy Office, I arrest  
 The giver of these pagan rites and revels.

*[Guards step to Rizzio's side; he stands  
 speechless.]*

*Porzia (stunned).* Oh, . . . Oh!

*Rizzio (hoarsely).* And at whose urgency, my  
 lord Prelate, *[Starts forward.]*

I ask you at whose urgency this is done!  
 This deed of churchly duty! . . . . Yes, in justice  
 I seek; for there has been  
 Some traitor and perhaps a liar.— Osio?  
 Bianca? (*fiercely*) half, half I believe 't was you!

[*All are appalled.*

*Porzia.* No, no, Rizzio! . . . no! . . . what are  
 you saying!

[*Restrainingly.*

Will you requite injustice with a worse?

[*To Querio, who is unmoved.*

Monsignor, this in truth is hunting haste,  
 To search him out  
 Upon his wedding-day,  
 And bind him with the very wreaths of it!  
 Could you not wait an eve, a night, until  
 To-morrow when his nuptials would be o'er!

*Querio.* Who weds two brides is bigamist,  
 Signora.

When he divorces heresy accuse me.  
 But now say your farewells,

And with a moment's privacy: that can  
I grant, that and no more: the rest's with Rome.

*[Retires to rear — as do all but the two.]*

*Porzia (whom dread now begins to overwhelm).*

My Rizzio! my own! I cannot bear it!

O why did you not go, delaying till

This fate has fallen

Now like a pall upon us!

I fear! I fear! . . .

To be so wedded, ere I am a wife,

Here in this city of dark lawless passions!

*[Unrestrained!y.]*

Ah, can you not recant?

Deny at once and so —

*Rizzio.*

Porzia!

*Porzia.*

Nay!

And yet to have you leave me —

Ere any nuptial night has hung our couch,

Ere I have lain beside you in the dark

And like Madonna dreamed of motherhood!

Ah, ah, I cannot! . . . .



*Rizzio (with a thought).* Then — listen to me.

*[Osio starts, watching him.]*

I will return to you!

*Porzia.* Return?

*Rizzio.* Perchance.

It may be. For with florins to the guard —

With friendly gold —

May he not be persuaded

To bring me hither to you, for an hour

At midnight — tho it be but for an hour?

*[They look at each other.]*

*Querio (suspiciously, coming down).* Enough,  
Signor; the hour is running late.

And there are here, may be,

*[Sinisterly.]*

Some who are avid now to be at vespers.

*Porzia (embracing Rizzio).* Then go, my lord;  
farewell, and fear not for me,

Since I shall toil only for your release.

*[He goes, with Querio and guard. Porzia  
quails, then lets Marina lead her into*

*the house. All follow but Bianca, Osio,  
and Matteo at gate.*

*Bianca (as the twilight begins, to Osio).*

Now that you have achieved so much, what more?

*[He does not answer: she also turns into  
house.]*

*Osio (whom a turmoil of passions is tearing).*

What more? . . . God in His Heaven shall de-  
cide! . . .

Doubts have I had — like swine of hell within me —

But now He shall decide —

If she's to be the mother of heretics . . .

Or if I, who acclaim the Creed, shall have her!

*[Calls.]*

Matteo!

*Matteo.* Signor — *(advancing)* here.

*Osio.* You have done well.

And from to-night I take you to my service,

With wages that shall gild you from a want,

And with the benediction of the Church.

But there is one thing more:

Follow Monsignor Querio to the prison,  
Then to Signora Porzia return —  
And say her husband sent you  
To bid her be in the bower there at midnight.

*Matteo (staring).* But Signor, will she come ?

*Osio.* Say that she is

To speak no word — but keep to silence: go.

*[With fixed face, when the latch clicks  
behind him.]*

God shall decide, . . .

For if she does not know

My arms from *his*, then, it shall be a sign

That to them and my bed . . . she was predestined.

*[The dark grows. He turns soon to go, and the curtain falls. . . . But rises again at once and it is midnight; with only dim lights from the silent, sleeping city. As it does so Porzia with Marina comes out of the house. They pause and listen, Marina half-anxiously.]*

*Porzia (drawing free).* Return and have no fear,  
he soon will come,  
And bade me be alone there in the bower.  
The night is like a spell to draw him to me.

*Marina.* Signora—!

*Porzia.* Like a spell of living love.

*[Crosses over, as one in a dream, and enters  
the bower. Marina goes, the gate opens,  
and Osio silently enters, coming down  
into the bower amorously. A long si-  
lence . . . then slowly the Curtain.]*

## ACT II

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## A YEAR HAS ELAPSED

SCENE: *A sala, or hall, in the house of Rizzio. Its spacious walls and ceiling are frescoed with Virgilian scenes of a simpler and more beautiful kind than was usual to the decaying art of the period, and its high-arched open doors in the rear look out upon the terrace of Act I, toward the city, the Bay, Vesuvius — the whole magic curve of the haunting coast.*

*Several antique terminal-statues, the bodies of which end strangely in their pedestals, stand on either side these doors, and about the hall a Venus and other rare objects of vertu recovered from the past are mingled with the furnishings of the room, which, arranged for joy and beauty, seems somehow sad when unoccupied, as now, tho the Neapolitan sun is shining brightly in from the blue.*

*An arrased doorway right leads thro a passage to the street gate, and one left to the pene- tralia of the house, from which Marina enters deeply troubled. She looks back, shakes her head, saying, "O my poor lady!" then crosses to door right, listens, and hearing nothing goes slowly to door rear, where she waits, singing sadly:*

Shepherds down the mountain wind,  
 Wild pipes play in the street.  
 O Sicily, my Sicily,  
 I long for thee, my Sweet!

Once a year God takes his joy,  
 And that great joy is Spring,  
 He weds earth clad in blossom-robcs,  
 For His enrapturing!

*[She stops, listening, then resumes:*

Once a year God takes his joy,  
 And that —



*[She stops again hearing sounds at the gate, then is startled to paleness by the voice of Matteo; and as she listens a stern strong determination takes her.]*

*Matteo.* Basta! am I to pass! son of a dog!  
 Snout of a swine! knave! door-bestridding fool!  
 Have I not matters to her from my master,  
 To the Signora, from her husband's brother?

*[A scuffle.]*

The Devil's scullion feed you  
 On flame, until your liver shrivels black!

*[He has pushed past and enters the Hall insolently.]*

O-hé! who 's here! I come from Signor Osio!

*[Sees Marina.]*

The little Sicilian? Luck then is my slave!

*[Going to her.]*

Well, pretty fig! my little red pomegranate!  
 My fair forbidden fruit — pluckt in the moon!  
 I've come . . . *(stopped by her mien)* But,

Blood of the Holy Sepulchre!

*Looks around uncertainly.*

What thing has happened here?

*Marina.*

That, Matteo,

*[Speaks solemnly.]*

Which yet I do not know, and which I pray  
Madonna you may be as ignorant of.

*Matteo.* Eh? . . . I, my beauty?

*Marina.* You — who left this house

A year ago to-night with Signor Osio,

Left suddenly,

To serve his wealth and pleasure,

And who will leave it now as instantly,

If he is not in need — of absolution.

*Matteo.* Of . . . *(starting)* absolution?

Body, now, of Bacchus!

Does he not go to the Mass — and if he does  
not

Am I a priest

To know his need of purging?

Or if he sins must I be damned with him?

*Marina.* No, so the way from it —

*Matteo.* The way! the way!

I want no way, but in unto your mistress.

Am I not sent here to her with commands?

Ecco! and must I turn with them upon me,

And say a wench denied me?

Or that I feared

Perchance to catch the fever

Of heresy your master's shackled with?

Pah, but you jest, my ruby rose of Aetna —

*[Insinuatingly.]*

Whom yet I will not say but I will wed,

Tho you are from that Paynim-breeding isle

Of Sicily. You jest: so, in with you.

I seek your lady.

*Marina.* Seek . . . and shall find more.

*Matteo.* More! (*Struck by her tone.*) And from  
what and whom?

*Marina.* I wait Aloysius,

The leech.

*Matteo.* And that is what I am to fear?

*Marina.* The child is ill.

*Matteo (starting).* The child!

*Marina.* My lady's child.

[*With tensesr solemnity.*

For there has come of late into her mind

A dread that has dried life within her breasts.

*Matteo (who pales).* And am I God, woman, to  
keep dread from her?

*Marina.* Tending to it a strangeness comes upon  
her,

And with the sudden seizure of it, fear —

Shudders of horror, instincts of some evil

That she somehow has suffered, or committed —

[*Pauses*

*Matteo (paler).* What do you mean!

*Marina.* As one within a trance.

*Matteo.* And do you mean — ?

*Marina.* A mood seizes her flesh

That creeps against her will whene'er unto her

The little one is pressed.

*Matteo (trembling).* This is a lie!

*Marina.* She cannot look upon it, but with  
 terror,  
 That brings remorse  
 Awakening more terror!  
 The blight of heresy, she strives to think  
 Of her lord's heresy is sent upon her,  
 Or of her own refusal, it may be,  
 To wed the Convent, not the carnal world.

*Matteo.* To you she said this?

*Marina.* Ah! and Madonna! her sleep!  
 She walks with eyes wide open.

*Matteo.* I say you lie.  
 You do! as if Eternity were not,—

[*Seizes her wrist.*]

To frighten me and Signor Osio!

*Marina (coldly, stingingly).* And yet you under-  
 stand? ha, understand?  
 And hoarsely stare at words upon my lips  
 That should be meaningless as moony madness?  
 You penetrate  
 What not the Pope himself,

Nor any could, but with a guilty knowledge?  
 There's villainy I say, and you are in it,  
 The tool of a blind villain, who should be  
 Where now his brother rots, but that the Church  
 Is no more Christ's!

Ah, ah! my nails could tear  
 Your hated false caresses from my flesh,  
 Your kisses from my memory and fling them  
 Upon your wicked heart. And, for your master,  
 The Virgin strangle him! She — or another!

*Meaningly.*

Another!

*Matteo (startled).* What? what say you?

*Marina.* That — one — will!

For do not think such sins go unavenged.

*[Starts to go.*

*Matteo.* I say, what do you hint! Stand! there  
 is more!

*[Seizes her and clasps her to him.*

More! and I'll have it, by the crater of Hell!

More — and your lips shall tell it with a kiss.

*Marina.* Off me! (*Struggling.*) And if you do  
not get from here —

[*Breaks free.*

Before Signora Bianca —

*Matteo.* Ah! Ahi!

It has to do then with the Florentine?  
Who is as pagan as that devil Venus,

[*Points to statue.*

Yet prates to priests as subtly as my master  
Who will not play Love with her?  
By the Passion and Blood of God, has she again  
Gone jealous to Monsignor Querio,  
To get undone the doors of the Inquisition,  
So that your master . . . ? has she?

*Marina.* They are open! —

O would I who o'erheard might tell my lady! —  
And Signor Rizzio goes free to-day!  
Free to return here unto his own home!  
Free to cast from him a year's ignorance,  
A year's imprisonment beyond the pale  
Of any word or message

And learn how on his wedding-day when he  
 Was seized and on his wedding-night when he  
 Expected to return. . . . At that you quail?  
 Begone then, or —

*Matteo (gnashing).* The jealousy of women!  
 Their hearts are devil-pots that ever boil.—  
 But this is cud for Signor Osio,  
 So get you in at once unto your mistress  
 And say —

*Enter BIANCA suddenly in agitation*

*Bianca (looking about, with alarm).* Where is my  
 cousin? (*Calls*) Porzia! Porzia! —  
 She must return at once — unto the child:  
 Her mood is perilous and must be pent.

[*As they stare.*

Did you not see her? (*Impatient.*) Am I Proser-  
 pine  
 To make such gaping ghosts of you? I say,  
 Was she not here?

*Marina.* Signora — ?



*Bianca.* She hung, haunted,  
[*Searching again.*

By the child's cradle — there a little since,  
But suddenly rose up and fled from it,  
Saying — she would wed death!

*Marina.* Wed death! Signora!

*Bianca.* Yes; I was near. Her words — that  
struck me stark.

I could not speak. Do you know aught of this,  
You who have seen these dark distractions in her?  
Or does this . . . drone of Signor Osio?

[*Toward Matteo.*

What brings him here?

*Matteo.* Marina there.

*Bianca.* Ha, yes! [*At door rear.*

The honey from that flower — but what else?

[*At door right.*

Marina, yes, for you have been with her  
Too often under the moon, but there is more  
Behind you than yourself. Your master has  
Not sent you?

*Matteo.* Yes, Signora. To your beauty  
 He sends salute; and to your lady cousin  
 Who . . . O Signora, see! (*staring*) upon the terrace!

[*He has broken off awestruck.*

See, see! Oh, in her hand there is . . . Oh! — oh!

[*They turn and behold Porzia trancedly approaching, a stiletto before her and her lips moving obliviously.*

*Porzia.* And should I not, Madonna, if . . . O  
 should I?

Would you in heaven not assuage and shrive me?  
 Make the wound seem as holy as were Christ's?  
 Miraculously make —

*Bianca.* Porzia!

*Porzia.* Make — (*dazed*)

*Bianca.* Porzia, do you dream!

*Porzia (startled).* Bianca! (*dropping blade*) You?

[*A pause.*

*Bianca.* This speech to weapons! this distraction.

What

And whence and why is it? Your child —

*Porzia* (*quickly*).

Yes, yes! . . .

[*A little incoherent.*

I went into the garden to wait Aloysius,

My uncle Aloysius, who is a leech.

I have not slept. . . . What is it I am saying?

[*Seeing Matteo.*

Is that one come to tell —

*Bianca.*

He is the servant —

Of Osio.

*Porzia* (*with recoil*). Of Osio? . . . Of Osio?

[*Trembling.*

*Matteo.* Signora, yes. He sends me with a  
message.

He begs that he may see you.

*Porzia.*

See?

*Matteo.*

Implores

That this strange shrinking from him and aversion,

This pale . . . and unintelligible . . . repulsion

You have of late —

*Porzia.* Go back to him! go, go!

[*Struggling: with solemn abhorrence.*

And say I cannot see him. He is my brother,  
 My husband's brother,  
 Whom I pray to honor.

And is much like my husband:  
 A likeness that unreasonably, it may be,  
 I shudder to look upon: and yet —

*Matteo.* He bade me  
 To say, Signora, nothing must prevent;  
 That it concerns —

*Porzia.* See him I will not, ever!

*[With utter repugnance.]*

And cannot and should not tho he sought me in  
 That time which lies beyond eternity,  
 That space which is beyond the brink of all.  
 What thing it is haunting his heart I know not.  
 But in his presence all my flesh becomes  
 A shudder of horror,  
 All my soul a fear.  
 My husband's brother is he, my poor husband's,  
 But he. . . . Go, go! . . . and tell him that strange  
 drawings  
 And strange repulsions pass the hearts of those

Whom grief has gathered upon; and that I who  
Upon my wedding-day had torn from me —

*[Suddenly, uncontrollably.]*

Say, say I would he were not on the earth!

*Bianca (amazed, suspicious).* Porzia! what is this!

*Porzia.* I know not: go!

*[He goes, then Marina, fearful. An over-  
fraught pause.]*

*Bianca (at length, jealously).* For this there is a  
reason — and but one.

You love, you love him!

*Porzia.* Love . . . whom?

*Bianca.* Osio!

Yet dare not so you draw him with denials,  
Knowing that to repel is to entrain him.

*[As Porzia stares, stupefied.]*

O mockery of it! fools my eyes were, fools,  
That stood within my head and did not see!  
To me he spoke of love — yearning for you,  
And in me heard but echoes of you . . . ever!  
Yet, since you loved him,

Why unto his brother,  
 A heretic o'erturning God with stars,  
 Did you —

*Porzia (sinking to a divan).* I pray you speak  
 things possible,

Tho to your sight I seem and to my own  
 Like one unnatural beyond belief!

A child I have whom fever now is burning,  
 A husband all unhallowed in a prison . . .

Tho to my dreams last night he seemed to come.

[*Bianca starts.*

And so you must forgive me if blind shrinkings,  
 That to your sight seem semblances of love,  
 Unhelpably o'ertake me.

*Bianca:* Then — confess

Why Osio seeks you and why so you shun him?  
 And with the child why are your ways so wild?

You fear sometimes to touch it,  
 As if it were another's, or at your breast  
 Could only drink of horror.

*Porzia (rising).* Ah! . . . ah, ah!

*Bianca:* Love is it, love, I say, of Osio,  
That motherhood itself cannot amend,  
And Rizzio shall hear of it — this day.

*Porzia.* He . . . there in the darkness . . .  
can hear naught!

Leave me, I pray, to wait Aloysius.

Why comes he not? . . . Ah, and why do you rend  
me?

For you would not indeed to Rizzio

Add demon doubts . . .

Of me who am to him there in the night

Sun, moon and the white galaxy of stars

Such as not even Messer Bruno dreams. . . .

For, if you would, are you indeed Bianca

Who, as a child, sang with me under the olives

And cypresses; or watched with wonder eyes

The fisherman draw marvels from the deep,

Then homeward wing at eve to Ischia?

I cannot think it! . . . yet . . . !

[*Again distraught.*]

O what is it I dread! what thing has changed

All natural thoughts within me to repugnance,

All instincts and desires into terror?

I cannot touch my flesh, but I turn cold

As if I had touched pollution, cannot press

My child unto my breasts, but . . . true,

Oh, true! . . .

A madness whispers in me, "Take it away!"

*[Staring, hauntedly.]*

And too, and too . . . in solitude the want

Of Rizzio imprisoned comes to me;

Yet when I reach for him I seem enclasped

By unknown arms . . . in the sere dark, that . . .

Oh!

Now, now I feel them! off! *[A knock at the gate.]*

*(Starting)* Ah, ah, Aloysius! . . .

With healing! he at last! *(moving toward door)*

Uncle, the child —

*[Stops rooted to the floor for Osio has suddenly entered. He does not speak, nor she, but only Bianca, who looks at them uttering his name then turning goes.]*



*Osio (at length, tortured).* You shut me from your  
presence and your doors,

My messages return to me unopened,  
My messengers unhonored — yet I've come,  
For speak to you I must, and utterly!

*Porzia (gazing).* Lord Jesu!

*Osio.* Ai, Lord Jesu! let Him hear!  
For if ever He huddled in a Manger,  
Or hung, a red atonement, on the Cross —  
If you are not soul-bound to heresy,  
You must. . . .

*Porzia.* Oh, oh! why are you here?

*Osio.* Why? . . . Peace!  
Can you not listen to me without terror  
Not look upon me  
Without eyes where awe  
Sits like a murdered thing, or without hands  
That flutter at your heart unfalteringly?  
I am your brother.

*Porzia.* I . . . will hold you so.

*Osio.* But more than sister are you to my breast.

*Porzia.* Ah!

*Osio.* More, and I would save you from the  
flames

That bind you to a heretic and Hell.

Nay, stay! do not start from me; stay, do not!

But hear me, for not that alone has led me,

Not that alone,

But love unbearable —

Such as not any lips in all the world

Have sung, or any famed for it have breathed

Upon the pagan pages of a book:

For they were heathen all, in penance now

Upon the sulphur winds that sweep Inferno,

While I —

*Porzia (whose look stops him).* While, you, you,  
inordinate,

Speak baseness so unto your brother's wife?

*Osio.* His, no! no more! no more! for heresy

Has rent from him all rights, therefore I dare

To hunger for you, and to pledge the Pope

Will grant us dispensation —

*Porzia.* Oh! Oh, oh!

[*Overwhelmed with loathing.*

*Osio.* You will not heed it, will not come with me?

*Porzia.* Madonna, wash his words out of my brain,

[*Her hands lifted.*

And from my memory purge their pollution!

(*To him*) Go, go! . . .

And may the poison of you never pass

Across my sight again.

*Osio.* It will — to save you,

For mine you are — God wills it! — and . . . have been!

*Porzia.* Oh!

*Osio.* Have! — it was predestined — by His breath.

Was he to see you mate a heretic,

Or from your body spring the Anti-Christ?

A year ago you wedded one, and I

Was ready with the hands of the Inquisition.



*Porzia.* Rizzio?

*Osio.* Out of prison?

*[As she gazes at him.]*

I tell you the child is mine! for Rizzio  
Returned not to you. Mine, mine, and you must  
Protect it and yourself.

*Porzia.* From — ? . . . do you mean?  
O do you mean that he may come? that you  
Expect him, O and soon? and that Bianca —?

*Osio.* I mean no mysteries, but that the child  
Is mine —  
And you may be —  
And all be well.

*Porzia.* But he will come? you have some in-  
timation?  
Some waft of his release, some prescience?  
But say it and I will forgive you all!  
Say that my arms once more shall clasp him to me!  
Say that my heart once more shall beat to his!  
Say that my eyes once more shall drink the dawn  
From his, and I —

*Osio.* Be still. For if you will not  
 Now, now be mine, one thing must be assured  
 Beyond the sway of peril:  
 It must be kept from him there is a child.

*Porzia.* Never! but I will lay it in his arms,  
 Unto the cradle of his bosom bring it —  
 While I have hands of purity to lift it —  
 And —

*Osio.* Have him fling it forth? Hush! what is  
 here?

*[A knocking at the gate: amazed cries: then  
 Rizzio's voice.]*

*Porzia.* Rizzio! Rizzio! Rizzio!

*Rizzio (without).* Porzia! Porzia!

*[He enters, weak and worn, in tattered  
 raiment, and comes down to where she  
 gazes too overcome to embrace him.]*

*Rizzio.* My Porzia! (*With a clasp.*) O do I look  
 upon you,  
 Not on some prison vision that will vanish  
 Between my arms to nothingness of air?

Some wan and hollow haunting of the night?  
 Look up into my soul and speak to me  
 With eyes that are incarnate songs of love!  
 Ah, what, you cannot?  
 The swiftness of my coming has undone you?

*Porzia.* No, no!

*Rizzio.* Then give reality to dreams,  
 Linking your lips to mine! . . . Oh, oh! at last!  
 At last I know I live  
 And am more than  
 A madness in miasmatic night immured!  
 And that eternity of want can end —  
 Upon your breast — within this house where —

*(Seeing Osio)* You?

*[With inexplicable antagonism.]*

*Osio.* I . . . and I have no welcome for you,  
 knowing  
 That heresy is still hot in your heart.

*Rizzio.* For which you with accursèd joy are  
 glad? . . .

*[Osio goes rankling into garden.]*

What does he here, my Porzia? what does he?

[*Troubled.*

Has he been much with you? Sometimes there in  
My fetters I have fought strange dreams of him,  
Battled against him as against a brood  
Of elemental horrors and contagion.  
Yet when I would awake —

*Porzia (clinging fearfully).* My Rizzio! . . .

*Rizzio.* Ai, yours! when hope was darkest, when  
the links

Of wolvish steel were feeding on my bone.

[*Holds out wrists.*

Or like a python wound me as I slept.

*Porzia.* The pity of my heart and lips shall heal  
them. [With caresses.

*Rizzio.* They and the passion of you, and the  
peace

And beauty of your body and your soul,  
That were torn from me at the very altar,  
But now — purer for waiting — shall be mine.

*Porzia (trembling).* Yes, yes, Rizzio!



*Rizzio.* Say, say it again!

For oh, the jealous fears that have defiled me,  
The visions I have called a lie in vain,  
The hot hands I have seen laid on your beauty!

*[To her look of helplessness.*

O say it! for you gaze — as if you could not!  
As if . . . O what is wringing you! You can  
Not say it — that no arms but mine have held you,  
No lips but mine have ever lingered, ever —?

*[A pitiful cry of distress breaks from within,  
then a hurry of feet and Marina rushes  
on anguished.*

*Marina.* My lady! O my lady! . . . the child!  
the child!

*Porzia (swaying).* What is it? Speak!

*Marina.* My lady, it is dead! *[A wild pause.*

*Porzia.* Dead? dead? my child? my little one?  
my own?

My baby? . . . Oh; oh, oh! . . . oh, oh, oh, oh!

*[She stretches her arms distractedly before  
her and goes.*

*Rizzio (who has staggered, dazed, and is frenziedly realizing).* God, God, the madness . . . is this then the madness. . . .

At last! . . .

Her child? her child? and I — never a husband?

She has a child and I am childless! I! . . .

Have I been tricked, beaten, betrayed, undone,

Duped by a lie of low inconstancy.

[*To Marina.*

Speak, quean!

*Marina.* O sir, I know not what to say!

*Rizzio.* Tho truth bays wild, fool-face!

*Marina.* Sir, sir, I cannot!

But hold, I pray you! for she is . . . she . . . Ah!

[*Has cried out, for the curtains have parted and Porzia is entering — the dead child in her arms, her eyes gazing sightlessly.*

*Rizzio (who looks at her, racked, laughs wildly, then rushes to door).* At last, at last the heretic's in Hell!

[*Breaks past Aloysius entering, and is gone.*

*Marina (to the leech).* O Signor Aloysius, my  
poor, poor lady! *(Weeping.*

My lady! O what now, what now shall heal her!

*Aloysius.* Go in, prepare her bed, and I will bring  
her.

In, in, I say! *(as she goes; to the mother)* Porzia!

*[Gently.*

*[She does not answer.*

Come, Porzia!

*Porzia.* Yes, yes; is the grave ready?

Then let the clod fall softly, and the shroud

Not wake him, for he sleeps. And let there be

Some orange blossoms too . . . some orange  
blossoms!

*[She permits him to lead her in, still gazing  
before her*

CURTAIN.

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## **ACT III**

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## NIGHT OF THE NEXT DAY

SCENE: *The terrace of Act I, but lit wanly now by the moon, whose sheen is cast like a pall over the city and kindles the Bay to quivering silver. Thro the open door of the house and from the window of Porzia's chamber which is just above the image of the Virgin, light falls streaming toward the Pan and toward the deeply shadowed bower. A stone seat is set to the front centre.*

*Osio, haunted and desperate, stands without the bower, watching Matteo who is stealthily coming down from the pedestal of the Virgin where he has climbed to listen, and who crosses the terrace to him.*

**Osio.** Her words! give me her words — and them alone!

What were they?

*Matteo.* I could learn no more, Signor.  
The fever is tossing her.

*Osio.* To peril of death?  
She is sinking now down into ceaseless Hell,  
Where he shall follow?  
Is swooning low to it?  
And to eternal flame?

*Matteo.* I do not know.  
But burningly she sleeps. (*Uneasily.*) Shall we  
not go? [*Looks around.*]  
For if we here are found —

*Osio.* They have not brought her  
The Sacrament?

*Matteo.* No priest is there, Signor.

*Osio:* The child, she asks for it?

*Matteo.* I seemed to hear  
Signora Bianca say that since the morning  
When it was borne in secret to the tomb  
She has not.  
But still her moan's of Signor Rizzio,  
Who has not yet returned, tho still they seek him.



*Osio (bitterly)*. Her blood be on his head! upon  
his head!

And not on mine, that has not swayed to schism,  
If death is calling now for her damnation.

No, I am pure of it!

*Matteo*.

But should he come?

*[Again looks around.*

*Osio*. I'll fear him not. Never! For odium  
It were to God that I a moment should —

Him black with unbelief!

But come he will not . . . since he left deluded.

Or if he should a voice has pledged to me

Full absolution if —

*Matteo*.

What, Signor?

*Osio*.

Peace!

He will not. So again mount up!

*Matteo (unwillingly)*.

Signor!

*Osio*. Mount, mount, and strain the most to  
get me more.

*[Matteo loathly crosses and again ascends  
the pedestal. But scarcely has done*

*so when a knock comes at the gate.  
He steps down into the shadow of the  
image — Osio into bower. Then Mar-  
ina appears from the house hesitantly.*

*Marina.* Who knocks? Signor Aloysius, is it  
you?

*Aloysius.* Ai, ai! and weary: open!

*[Being admitted.*

*This day! this day!*

The search till he was found; and then the toil —  
The patient physic poured  
Vainly it seemed unto the proud or poor.

*[Taking off medicine pouch.*

But it at last is done. Now, the relief —  
He came reluctant? and to her outpoured  
A lava of wild purpose and revenge  
When he was told?

*Marina.* He? (*staring*) Signor Rizzio?  
You have not brought him?

*Aloysius.* Brought? Is he not here?

*Marina (dismayed).* Signor!

*Aloysius.* But how? but how? (*dropping  
pouch.*) Not he? and Bruno?  
Who had been with him,  
Whom he had but left  
To search, sudden it seemed, for Osio?  
Not Bruno! whom I pledged to find and lead him  
Here to her — since we learned that Osio  
Has fled from Naples?

*Marina.* Signor, neither! none!  
[*Involuntarily.*

O he must come, or she will die!

*Aloysius.* . . . Die? . . .

*Marina.* New evils gather ever in vendetta!

*Aloysius.* You run from them too rapidly to death,  
Which comes but when it will — and not from sleep  
In which I left her.

*Marina.* But her sleep has grown  
To fever that has flowed into her brain!  
Her heart is full of moans,  
Her lips of murmurs!  
She tore the crucifix from off her neck

And flung it from her, saying that it was  
The arms of Osio; and then cried out  
That she was virgin and immaculately  
Had borne a child, that now was laid in the tomb,  
But should arise again. Then would she start  
And say there is no God, but only stars,  
But stars, a heaven of stars! For which Signora  
Bianca ignorant arose and chid her.

*Aloysius.* And all unduly did! This must be  
stayed,  
Not made immedicable.  
Go in; prepare the herbs that I left with you.

*[She goes — as he stands pondering — past  
Bianca, who enters.]*

Bianca (*pausing, then with resolute bitterness*).  
So you have come and have not brought him?  
Well,  
The insult of this secrecy must end,  
The shrouding and affronting soil of it.  
I'll sift in doubt no more, but have the truth.

*Aloysius.* Signora?

*Bianca.* O, fatality's in the world,  
 From atom to infinity it may be,  
 But there is also sinning. Which is this?  
 And whence is it  
 If she though sunk in sleep  
 Says ever "I must go into the bower!"  
 And ever with elusive lips "the bower!"  
 Whom would she meet?

*Aloysius.* The bower?

*Bianca.* Whom! or if  
 No guilt is in her why this grievous haunting?

*Aloysius.* I will go to her.

*Bianca (angrily).* So to evade confessing?  
 To avoid granting  
 That it is Osio?  
 That it is he has been her paramour?  
 That he it is has plundered her with passion —  
 Whose proof is the child  
 Which Heaven has struck dead?  
 Will go? Nor first deny  
 That rightly Rizzio has turned from her

And now perchance is seeking Osio —

*[Breaks off, for the gate opens and Rizzio slowly enters. A deadly purpose is on him as he looks around.]*

*Rizzio (at length).* You clothe my thought,  
Bianca, in the flesh  
Of speech that I have shunned: but we shall  
know —

Soon know, for I have tracked him to this gate.

*[To Aloysius, solemnly.]*

Where is he?

*Aloysius (amazed).* He? . . . Osio?

*Rizzio.* So! reveal him!

*Aloysius.* But — this is error! . . . he is gone  
from Naples!

*Rizzio.* Or wrapped in lies is hidden here for her?  
By the very God of the world, I say —

*(With restraint.)* But . . . no!

*Aloysius.* And “no” until you trust it! For  
her fate

Is not as you suppose.

*Rizzio.* Nor his? Nor he!

This bigot whose religion's lechery?

This monk to whom licentiousness is God?

This monster I illimitably loathe?

[*Searching as he speaks.*

I say that he is here; that I will find him;

That I have tracked him to you, and . . . (*suddenly*) Aha!

[*Discovers Matteo under Image.*

Aha! from Naples he is gone? from Naples?

[*Drawing Matteo forth.*

But leaves his shadow here?

*Matteo (terrified).* Signor! Signor!

[*Cringes.*

*Rizzio.* From Naples he is sped, but at the feet  
Of the Virgin he adores drops this devotion?

[*Slowly, terribly.*

Unpitiab!e toad — of filth begotten!

Pander who should go down into the Pit

And be the go-between of burning lusts,

Where lurks he?

*Matteo.* Signor! (*chokes*) Signor! I will show.  
 You shall have all; but let me live, Signor.  
 I have a father crippled who would starve  
 But for the gold I get . . . .  
 And she, Signora Porzia's innocent.

*Rizzio.* And virgin too! with that obliteration  
 You'll clothe her! Heaven's Queen, do I not  
 know  
 What Nature and conception are!

*Aloysius (trembling).* Ai, so!  
 And of them there is no denial here.  
 That she has given birth, herself has told you,  
 Herself . . . . The child *was* hers, but —

*Rizzio.* Born of miracles  
 And of imaginations and of dreams?  
 Is this Judea  
 And a day divine,  
 Not Italy and unregeneration,  
 Where God deposes the world to Borgias?  
 The father of it was he — he and no other!

*Aloysius.* But in her innocence she —





*Aloysius (quickly).* I will come to her.

*Rizzio (burningly).* Ah! ah!

*[Starts before him.*

And drug her now with opiates to prevent her?

Or waken her and bid her to deny?

Did I not deem it? and will you feign further?

Did I not say that Osio is here?

There in the bower is he, there! and she

Has planned to meet him.

*Marina.* Signor! no! no, no!

'Tis you that she would meet!

*Rizzio.* And not this croucher,

*[Of Mattco.*

Who is alone and purposeless? not he?

Nor him he pledges craven to reveal?

*Marina.* O, Signor, no!

*Rizzio.* Lies! and a world of lies!

*[His words writhing.*

And now you shall not hold her: she shall come:

Shall go into the bower. She shall take him

Before your very breath unto her breast.

*Marina.* But, Signor, she is asleep.

*Rizzio.* Go, lead her.

*Marina.* She

Knows not what she is doing!

*Rizzio.* She shall learn!

*Marina.* O Signor, no, no, no!

*Rizzio.* I tell you, then,

*[Starting toward house.*

That truth is still my star, and that no shrinking  
Shall stay me, tho all night contains would quench  
it.

*[Is near door, when Porzia herself like  
a wraith appears — and at the same  
time Osio is seen in the entrance to  
bower. Before Porzia's sleep-fixed eyes  
Rizzio falls back: her somnambulant  
speech breaks faintly.*

*Porzia.* The night is as a spell. No more of  
physic.

Return unto your couch. The Inquisition?

To take him? from his very nuptials take him?

He is no bigamist, Monsignor Querio. [Pauses.

Yes, Rizzio, at midnight! . . . Yes. — Ever

The arms of Osio round me instead!

This choking shroud of fever that defiles!

[*Moans, trying to throw it off.*

But, peace; the child will wake. My little one,

My baby! . . . lift the candle to its face.

[*Again moaning.*

O that is Osio, not Rizzio,

I see within its eyes! Yet do not kill him,

No, Rizzio, do not kill him, tho he is

Your brother and has done it: I have borne

Too much and they would prison you again.

Or if they did not, still the stars we love

Must not turn into . . . drops of bloody ven-  
geance! —

But, peace to this! (*moves forward*) for it is time  
to meet him.

*Marina* (*withholdingly*). Signora!

*Porzia*. Time to meet him in the bower.

[*Is nearing it.*

For now he is returned and all the night  
Is like a spell to draw my soul unto him.

*[With Osio before her.*

Yes, Rizzio, I come; you see, I . . . I . . .

*[Is reaching her arms to him when a shudder  
takes her. Her hand goes up to her  
brow and her gaze wanly flutters.  
Then suddenly her trance breaks and  
she shrinks screaming*

It is not he! not Rizzio! Not he!

Marina! Bianca! Help! not he! help; help!

*[Sinks wildly back to the seat.*

*Marina (who runs to her).* Signora, no! not he!  
not he! but we

Are here and he is come and you shall see him.

*[Kneeling.*

See, you have dreamed! . . .

*Aloysius (by her).* And have awakened, Por-  
zia,

Awakened from imaginings and terrors;

For you are ill. . . .

*Marina.* And knew not what you did! . . .  
But now look round you and all shall be well.

*[She looks and, finding Rizzio, rises again  
bewildered.]*

*Marina (who understands).* It now is he, Signora;  
do not fear.

*Porzia.* Rizzio! Rizzio! Rizzio!

*Rizzio.*

*Porzia!*

*[He sobs.]*

*Porzia.* O, is it dreams? I pray do not deceive  
me.

I think that it is he, but O so many  
My thoughts have been and full of pain to me  
That truth shall never more, alas, be true,  
Or trust be ever utter trust again  
Till peace has come to me as pure as that  
To earth, from the rainbow's woven amulet  
Upon the brow of God — peace wed to kindness.  
And to deceive me now were less than kind!

*Rizzio.* My Porzia! *(Falls weeping at her feet.)*

Deceit at last is o'er!





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