

THE WHITE DEVIL

by JOHN WEBSTER

adapted by ALEX COX

CGI SHOT ONE

DUSK. A FANTASY CITY OF GREAT CASTLES ON A HILL.

THE PALACE OF THE DUKE DE MEDICIS, THE MANSION OF DUKE BRACCIANO, THE CATHEDRAL. ALL AGLOW IN A MAGICAL SUNSET.

ANGLE ON THE LOWER DEPTHS OF THESE CASTLES AND PALACES.

LOWER DEPTHS EXT DAY

THREE MEN attempt to force their way through the GATE of a tall, razor-wire fence. The sounds of a PARTY can be heard, at a distance.

LODOVICO, toughest of the three, swipes his ID CARD in the door's card reader. A SCREEN lights up, featuring LODOVICO's dissipated, villanous face, his name and details, and the flashing word, repeated, BANISHED.

LODOVICO
Banished?

ANGLE ON HIS HENCHMEN

Bleached-blond tough guys.

ANTONELLI
It grieves me much to see the sentence.

LODOVICO swipes his card repeatedly. The screen vanishes.

GASPARO
But you are justly doomed.
You have acted certain murders,
Bloody and full of horror.

ANGLE ON CATWALKS

Stretching back and forth above them; the thud-thud of cars on an overpass, above that.

LODOVICO indicates two figures on an upper catwalk. They are the DUKE OF BRACCIANO and his secretary, FLAMINEO. The two men speak in whispers.

LODOVICO
So - I wonder then some great men escape
This banishment. There's Paulo Giordano Ursini,
The Duke of Bracciano,
Who by close panderism seeks to prostitute
The honour of Vittoria Corombona -

ANGLE ON GASPARO AND ANTONELLI

Banging on the gate, trying to attract attention, to be let in.

GASPARO
Oh, sir!

BRACCIANO and FLAMINEO ignore them. They head along the catwalk to a tall industrial building, from which the PARTY SOUNDS emanate.

ANGLE ON LODOVICO

Staring at his betters, as they disappear from sight.

LODOVICO
I'll make Italian cut-works in their guts
If ever I return.

ANGLE ON FLAMINEO

He swipes his ID card. The red light turns to green.
The screen says, WELCOME.

The door swings open. BOUNCERS and SOLDIERS usher BRACCIANO and FLAMINEO into a -

FABULOUS PARTY INT NIGHT

- where they are surrounded by DUKE BRACCIANO'S ENTOURAGE. BRACCIANO's style is that of a Colombian drug lord, circa 1986. He flaunts it with a fur coat, a satin suit, a silk scarf, gold-rimmed shades and much jewelry.

FLAMINEO wears a dark tie and dark suit, like Sydney Falco.

The scene is an old power house, full of TV MONITORS which display clips and images of the celebrity participants.

BRACCIANO can't take his eyes off VITTORIA COROMBONA, a compelling, beautiful woman, who is the centre of attention at every gathering.

ANGLE ON CAMILLO

An older henchman-politician, VITTORIA's husband, seeking BRACCIANO's support for something.

CAMILLO
Your best of rest.

PHOTOGRAPHERS start snapping pictures of VITTORIA.
She directs the PAPERAZZI to BRACCIANO.

VITTORIA
Unto my lord the duke,
The best of welcome. More lights! Attend the duke.

FLASHBULBS POP.

VITTORIA and CAMILLO start to bicker. For just a moment,
she and DUKE BRACCIANO lock eyes.

ANGLE ON FLAMINEO

BRACCIANO's secretary, and VITTORIA's brother, adjusting
his tie.

BRACCIANO
Flamineo.

FLAMINEO
My lord.

BRACCIANO
(staring at VITTORIA)
Quite lost, Flamineo.

FLAMINEO
Pursue your noble wishes, I am prompt
As lightning to your service, O my lord!
(whispers)
The fair Vittoria, my happy sister,
Shall give you present audience -

BRACCIANO
Are we so happy?

FLAMINEO
Can it be otherwise?
Observed you not tonight, my honoured lord,
Whichever way you went, she threw her eyes?
I have dealt already with her chambermaid,
Zanche the Moor, and she is wondrous proud
To be the agent for so high a spirit.

ON THE MONITORS ABOVE THEM, A TV MONTAGE

the images of VITTORIA COROMBONA stand out: attending functions,
throwing parties, she is always immaculate, composed...

BRACCIANO
We are happy above thought, because above merit.

FLAMINEO

Above merit! We may now talk freely.
 What is it you doubt? Her coyness? That's but
 the superficialities of lust most women have; yet why
 should ladies blush to hear that named, which
 they don't fear to handle?

CUT TO -

LIMO INT NIGHT

BRACCIANO and FLAMINEO sit, drinking and plotting.

FLAMINEO

O, they are politic; they know our desire
 is increased by the difficulty of enjoying -

BRACCIANO

Oh, but her jealous husband -

WIPE TO -

VITTORIA'S MANSION INT NIGHT

Modest in size. Tastefully done. SERVANTS take their coats.

FLAMINEO stays close to his boss.

FLAMINEO

Hang him!

They enter an -

AQUARIUM INT NIGHT

- with several big tanks filled with fighting fish.
 Four sunken sofas in the middle of the room.

FLAMINEO

Shroud you within this closet, good my lord;
 Some trick now must be thought on to divide
 My brother-in-law from his fair bed-fellow.

BRACCIANO

Oh, should she fail to come -

FLAMINEO

I must not have your lordship thus unwisely
 amorous. 'Tis just like a summer bird-cage
 in a garden: the birds that are without despair
 to get in, and the birds that are within

fear they shall never get out.
 Away, away, my lord.

FLAMINEO hides BRACCIANO behind one of his fish tanks.
 CAMILLO enters. He is now the host, pleased that the party
 has moved on to his home.

FLAMINEO

See here he comes. This fellow by his apparel
 Some men would judge a politician -
 (embraces CAMILLO)
 How now, brother?
 What, travelling to bed with your kind wife?

CAMILLO

I assure you, brother, no.
 I do not well remember, I protest,
 When I last lay with her.

FLAMINEO

Strange you should lose your count.

CAMILLO

We never lay together but ere morning
 There grew a flaw between us.

FLAMINEO

It had been your part
 To have made up that flaw.

CAMILLO

True, but she loathes I should be seen in it.

FLAMINEO

Why, sir, what's the matter?

CAMILLO

The duke your master visits me - I thank him,
 And I perceive how, like an earnest bowler,
 He very passionately leans that way
 He should have his bowl run.

FLAMINEO

I hope you do not think -

CAMILLO

That nobleman bowl booty? Faith, his cheek
 Hath a most excellent bias; it would fain
 Jump with my mistress.

FLAMINEO

Will you be an ass,
 Despite your Aristotle?

ANGLE ON BRACCIANO

On the other side of the fish tank, watching his RIVAL wound up by his SECRETARY.

CAMILLO

This doth not physic me -

FLAMINEO

It seems you are jealous: I'll show you the error of it by a familiar example: I have seen a pair of spectacles fashioned with such perspective art, that lay down but one twelve pence, 'twill appear as if there were twenty. Now, should you wear a pair of these spectacles, and see your wife tying her shoe, you would imagine twenty hands were taking up of your wife's clothes, and this would put you into a horrible causeless fury.

CAMILLO

The fault there, sir, is not in the eyesight.

FLAMINEO

True, but they that have the yellow jaundice think all objects they look on to be yellow. Jealousy is worse -

VITTORIA, in a new evening outfit, enters the den.

FLAMINEO

(indicates his sister)

See, she comes; what reason have you to be jealous of this creature? Lock up this wife? Bar her the sound of revels?

He waves to VITTORIA. She waves back at him; ignores her husband.

FLAMINEO

Be wise; I will make you friends, and you shall go to bed together. Walk you aloof -

He hustles CAMILLO towards the nearest fish tank. Then, loosening his tie, he saunters towards VITTORIA, who is being served drinks and canapes.

FLAMINEO

Sister -

(takes a canape, a glass of champagne, whispers)

My lord attends you.

(aloud)
Your husband is wondrous discontented.

VITTORIA
I did nothing to displease him; I carved
to him at supper-time.

FLAMINEO
(whispered)
You need not have carved him, they say he's
a capon already. I must now seemingly fall
out with you.
(aloud, for CAMILLO's benefit)
Shall a gentleman so well descended as Camillo
(whispered)
that lousy slave -

ANGLE ON CAMILLO

Watching the reflections of his WIFE and her BROTHER.

CAMILLO
Now he begins to tickle her.

ANGLE ON VITTORIA AND FLAMINEO

Intimate, whispery and giggly.

FLAMINEO
An excellent scholar - is he not a courtly
gentleman?
(whispers)
When he wears white satin, one would take him
by his black muzzle to be no other creature
than a maggot.

ANGLE ON CAMILLO

Staring at their reflections, in the fish tank.

FLAMINEO
(louder)
Come, my lord attends you; thou shalt go
to bed to my lord.

CAMILLO
Now he comes to it.

FLAMINEO
Thou shalt lie in a bed stuffed with turtles'
feathers, swoon in perfumed linen like the
fellow was smothered in roses. So perfect
shall be thy happiness, that as men at sea

think land and trees and ships go that way
they go, so both heaven and earth shall seem
to go your voyage. Shalt meet him; 'tis fixed,
with nails of diamonds to inevitable necessity.

VITTORIA
(whispers)
How shalt rid him hence?

FLAMINEO
I will put breeze in his tail, set him gadding
presently.

(to CAMILLO)
I've almost wrought her to it; I find her
coming: but, might I advise you now, for this
night I would not lie with her. I would cross
her humour to make her more humble.

CAMILLO
Shall I, shall I?

FLAMINEO
It will show in you a supremacy of judgment.
(winks)
Walk by her in the nobleman's fashion, and tell
her you will lie with her at the end of the
progress.

CAMILLO nods, turns to VITTORIA.

CAMILLO
Vittoria, I cannot be induced, or as a man
would say, incited -

VITTORIA
To do what, sir?

CAMILLO
To lie with you tonight. Your silkworm used
to fast every third day, and the next following
spins the better. To-morrow at night, I am
for you.

VITTORIA
You'll spin a fair thread, trust to it.

CAMILLO
(whispers to FLAMINEO)
Tell me tomorrow how scurvily she takes
my unkind parting.

FLAMINEO
I will.

CAMILLO

(winks at FLAMINEO)

Did you not mark the jest of the silkworm?
Good night - in faith, I will use this trick
often.

FLAMINEO

Do, do, do.

Exit CAMILLO. FLAMINEO goes to his sister, kisses her.

FLAMINEO

So, now you are safe.

He beckons her to follow him.

FLAMINEO

Come, sister, darkness hides your blush.
Women are like cursed dogs, let loose at
midnight; then they do most good, or most
mischief. My lord, my lord!

BRACCIANO appears, between the fish tanks. He reads aloud
from a poem he has texted on his mobile phone.

BRACCIANO

(scrolling, reading)

I could wish time would stand still,
And never end this interview, this hour;
But all delight doth itself soonest devour.

ZANCHE, VITTORIA's very sexy, super-competent, personal
assistant, lays a silk sheet across the sofas, and two fair
cushions.

Enter CORNELIA - VITTORIA and FLAMINEO's mother - unseen,
behind the fighting fish.

BRACCIANO

(reading, sitting)

Let me into your bosom, happy lady,
Pour out, instead of eloquence, my vows.
Loose me not, madam, for if you forgo me,
I am lost eternally.

VITTORIA

Sir, in the way of pity,
I wish you heart-whole.

BRACCIANO

You are a sweet physician.

VITTORIA

Sure, sir, a loathed cruelty in ladies
Is as to doctors many funerals;
It takes away their credit.

BRACCIANO

Excellent creature!
We call the cruel fair; what name for you
That are so merciful?

ANGLE ON FLAMINEO AND ZANCHE

They have stepped back, but not very far.
From behind the tanks, they spy on their masters.

ZANCHE

See now they close.

FLAMINEO

(nuzzling ZANCHE's neck)
Most happy union.

ANGLE ON VITTORIA, RECLINING ON ZANCHE'S CUSHIONS.

BRACCIANO studies one of her earrings.

BRACCIANO

What value is this jewel?

VITTORIA

'Tis the ornament of a weak fortune.

BRACCIANO

In sooth, I'll have it; nay, I will but change
My jewel for your jewel.

FLAMINEO and ZANCHE grow more passionate.

FLAMINEO

Excellent,
His jewel for her jewel - well put in, duke.

BRACCIANO offers VITTORIA something scintillating,
super-valuable.

BRACCIANO

Nay, let me see you wear it.

VITTORIA

Here, sir?

BRACCIANO

Nay, lower, you shall wear my jewel lower.

ZANCHE

That's better - she must wear his jewel lower.

VITTORIA responds to BRACCIANO's taste in jewelry placement - then she breaks away. A troubled expression clouds her fabulous face. Behind her, the fighting fish circle.

VITTOIRA

I'll tell your grace
A dream I had last night.

BRACCIANO

Most wishedly.

VITTORIA

A foolish idle dream:
Methought I walked about the mid of night
Into a churchyard, where a goodly yew-tree
Spread her large root in ground. Under that yew,
As I sat sadly leaning on a grave,
Chequered with cross-sticks, there came stealing in
Your duchess and my husband; one of them
A pickaxe bore, the other a rusty spade,
And in rough terms they gan to challenge me
About this yew.

BRACCIANO

That tree?

VITTORIA

This harmless yew;
They told me my intent was to root up
That well-grown yew, and plant instead of it
A withered blackthorn, and for that they vowed
To bury me alive. My husband straight
With pickaxe 'gan to dig, and your fell duchess
With shovel, like a Fury, voided out
The earth and scattered bones. Lord, how methought
I trembled, and yet for all this terror
I could not pray.

FLAMINEO

No, the devil was in your dream.

FLAMINEO, making love to ZANCHE, is excited by his SISTER's story.

In their tanks, the fighting fish become more frenzied.

VITTORIA

When to my rescue there arose, methought,
A whirlwind, which let fall a massy arm

From that strong plant,
 And both were struck dead by that sacred yew,
 In that base shallow grave that was their due.

FLAMINEO
 Excellent devil!
 She's taught him in a dream
 To make away his duchess and her husband.

ZANCHE moans.

ANGLE ON CORDELIA

Silently watching this scene of sex and conspiracy to murder.

ANGLE ON BRACCIANO

Embracing VITTORIA, who shivers.

BRACCIANO
 Sweetly shall I interpret this your dream.
 You are lodged within his arms who shall protect you
 From all the fevers of a jealous husband,
 From the poor envy of our phlegmatic duchess.
 I'll seat you above law, and above scandal.
 You shall to me at once
 Be dukedom, health, wife, children, friends, and all.

Suddenly CORNELIA, unable to be silent longer, steps into
 the light. The fish swim off in all directions.

CORNELIA
 Woe to light hearts - they still forerun our fall!

FLAMINEO
 What fury raised thee up? Away, away!

ZANCHE, embarrassed, retreats. CORNELIA ignores her SON,
 glowers over BRACCIANO and her DAUGHTER.

CORNELIA
 What make you here, my lord, this dead of night?

FLAMINEO
 I pray, will you go to bed then,
 Lest you be blasted?

CORNELIA
 O that this fair garden be a nursery
 For witchcraft, rather than a burial plot
 For both your honours!

BRACCIANO laughs. They aren't in a garden. But VITTORIA

knows to whom CORNELIA refers.

VITTORIA
Dearest mother, hear me.

CORNELIA
See the curse of children!
In life they keep us frequently in tears,
And in the cold grave leave us in pale fears.

BRACCIANO
Come, come, I will not hear you.

VITTORIA
(kisses him)
Dear my lord.

CORNELIA
Where is thy duchess now, adulterous duke?
Thou little dream'st this night she's come to Rome.

FLAMINEO steps into the circle of light.

FLAMINEO
How? Come to Rome?

VITTORIA
The duchess -

BRACCIANO
She had been better -

CORNELIA is well pleased with VITTORIA's and BRACCIANO's panic.
Only FLAMINEO keeps his cool.

CORNELIA
The lives of princes should like dials move,
Whose regular example is so strong,
They make the times by them go right or wrong.

FLAMINEO
So, have you done?

CORNELIA
(ignoring him)
Unfortunate Camillo!

VITTORIA
I do protest, if any chaste denial,
If anything but blood could have allayed
His long suit to me -

CORNELIA

I will join with thee,
 To the most woeful end ever mother kneeled -
 (she tries to pull VITTORIA to her knees)
 If thou dishonour thus thy husband's bed,
 Be thy life short as are the funeral tears
 In great men's.

BRACCIANO hauls VITTORIA back, kisses her roughly.

BRACCIANO
 Fie, fie, the woman's mad.

CORNELIA
 Be thy act Judas-like - betray in kissing.
 May'st thou be envied during his short breath,
 And pitied like a wretch after his death!

VITTORIA
 O me accursed!

This is too much for VITTORIA, who had not counted on her MOTHER's presence, much less her curse. She flees.

FLAMINEO
 Are you out of your wits? My lord,
 I'll fetch her back again.

BRACCIANO
 No, I'll to bed.
 Send Doctor Julio to me presently -
 (to CORNELIA)
 Uncharitable woman! Thy rash tongue
 Hath raised a fearful and prodigious storm.
 Be thou the cause of all ensuing harm.

He exits. FLAMINEO glares at his mother, straightens his tie.

FLAMINEO
 Now, you that stand so much upon your honour,
 I would fain know where lies the mass of wealth
 Which you have hoarded for my maintenance.

CORNELIA
 What? Because we are poor
 Shall we be vicious?

FLAMINEO
 Pray, what means have you
 To keep me from the galleys, or the gallows?
 My father proved himself a gentleman,
 Sold all his land, and, like a fortunate fellow,
 Died ere the money was spent.

He grabs a popular magazine from a glassy surface.
On the cover is DUKE BRACCIANO. FLAMINEO is in the photo,
half-obsured, in sunglasses.

FLAMINEO

You brought me up
At Padua, I confess, where I protest,
For want of means - the University judge me -
I have been fain to heel my tutor's stockings.
I graduated; then to this duke's service.

(leafs through the MAGAZINE)

I visited the court, whence I returned,
More courteous, more lecherous by far,
But not a suit the richer.

He scans the pages, trying to find another picture of BRACCIANO,
or, even better, of himself.

FLAMINEO

And shall I,
Having a path so open, and so free,
Retain your milk in my pale forehead?
No, this face of mine
I'll arm, and fortify with lusty wine,
'Gainst shame and blushing.

FLAMINEO attempts to show his MOTHER his picture. CORNELIA
knocks it out of his hand.

CORNELIA

O that I never had borne thee -

FLAMINEO

So would I.
I would the commonest courtesan
Had been my mother, rather than thyself.
Nature is very pitiful to whores,
To give them but few children, yet those children
Plurality of fathers; they are sure
They shall not want. Go, go,
Complain unto my great lord cardinal.

CORNELIA

O, my heart!
My son the pander. Now I find our house
Sinking to ruin. Earthquakes leave behind
Iron, or lead, or stone;
But - woe to ruin - violent lust leaves none.

She exits. FLAMINEO, alone for the first time, addresses
the CAMERA.

FLAMINEO

The duchess come to court! I like not that.

He picks up the magazine, leafs through it again, until he finds a page which bears his, VITTORIA's and BRACCIANO's photographs. He smooths the glossy paper.

FLAMINEO

We are engaged to mischief, and must on;
As rivers to find out the ocean
Flow with crook bendings beneath forced banks,
Or as we see, to aspire some mountain's top,
The way ascends not straight, but imitates
The subtle foldings of a winter's snake,
So who knows policy and her true aspect,
Shall find her ways winding and indirect.

He kisses his picture, carefully puts the magazine back where it was, and leaves. Sensing no one, the lights dim in the weird aquarium. Only the glowing fighting fish remain.

CGI SHOT TWO

DE MEDICIS PALACE EXT DAY

The highest castle on the hill. White stone towers, walled gardens filled with white-clad PARTYGOERS. A long line of LIMOUSINES approaches the drawbridge.

ANGLE on the window of -

FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS' STUDY INT DAY

- where all is business. It is like Corleone's office in THE GODFATHER. Venetian blinds, cigarette smoke, faces in shadow.

DON FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS, DUKE OF FLORENCE, sits behind his desk. The petitioner is ISABELLA DE MEDICIS DE URSINI, his sister.

FRANCISCO

Have you not seen your husband since you arrived?

ISABELLA

Not yet, sir.

FRANCISCO

Surely he is wondrous kind.
If I had such a dove-house as Camillo's,
I'd set fire on it, were it but to destroy
The polecats that haunt it -

The study door flies open, letting in light. And in runs little PRINCE GIOVANNI, ISABELLA's and BRACCIANO's sturdy, spoiled son.

GIOVANNI

Lord Uncle! You did promise me a horse,
And armour.

FRANCISCO

That I did, my pretty cousin.
Marcello, see it fitted.

ANGLE ON MARCELLO

One of DON FRANCISCO's many attendants, in the doorway. An honest-seeming sort. He is FLAMINEO's and VITTORIA's brother.

MARCELLO

My lord - the duke is here.

FRANCISCO

(rising)
Sister, away; you must not yet be seen.

ISABELLA

I do beseech you entreat him mildly.

FRANCISCO

I wish I may.

He kisses her. ISABELLA slips out of a side door as MARCELLO ushers in BRACCIANO and FLAMINEO.

FRANCISCO

Void the chamber.

ANGLE ON FLAMINEO

Bowing and scraping to the two DUKES as MARCELLO ushers him and little GIOVANNI out again.

CORRIDOR INT DAY

We follow FLAMINEO and MARCELLO out. MARCELLO marches off with little GIOVANNI. FLAMINEO leans against the DUKE's door, and listens -

FRANCISCO (O/S)

(audible through the door)
I pray, my lord,
Be you my orator, my heart's too full;
I'll second you anon.

FLAMINEO presses his ear against the door to hear the Cardinal -

MONTICELSO O/S

Ere I begin,
Let me entreat your grace forgo all passion,
Which may be raised by my free discourse.

STUDY INT DAY

FRANCISCO and MONTICELSO surround BRACCIANO, in easy chairs.

BRACCIANO

As silent as in church - you may proceed.

Silence. They all swirl the ice in their whiskey glasses.

MONTICELSO

It is a wonder to your noble friends,
That you should in your prime age
Neglect your throne for the soft down
Of an insatiate bed. O my lord,
The drunkard after all his lavish cups
Is dry, and then is sober; so at length,
When you awake from this lascivious dream,
Repentance then will follow, like the sting
Placed in the adder's tail.

BRACCIANO

You have said, my lord -

MONTICELSO

Enough to give you taste
How far I am from flattering your greatness.

BRACCIANO snorts. He sips his whiskey, and turns back to face DON FRANCISCO.

BRACCIANO

Now you that are his second, what say you?
Do not like young hawks fetch a course about;
Your game flies fair, and for you.

FRANCISCO

Do not fear it.
I'll answer you in your own hawking phrase.
Some eagles that should gaze upon the sun
Seldom soar high, but take their lustful ease,
Since they from dunghill birds their prey can seize.
You know Vittoria -

BRACCIANO

Yes -

CRASH! THE STUDY DOOR FLIES OPEN.

FLAMINEO stumbles in. The door, on which he was leaning, has given way. He bows to them all, mimes an explanation, bows again, goes out, shuts the door.

CORRIDOR INT DAY

Filling with PARTY GUESTS, soaked by the rain. FLAMINEO pushes through them, bowing to the odd PERSON OF IMPORTANCE. Pushing against the flow, he heads -

OUTSIDE EXT DAY

The rain pours down. The last wet GUESTS run in.

FLAMINEO hurries along the side of the house. He shelters beneath DUKE FRANCISCO's study window, pretending to light a cigarette.

FRANCISCO O/S

You shift your shirt there,
When you retire from tennis?

BRACCIANO O/S

Happily.

MONTICELSO O/S

She is your strumpet -

The CAMERA rises, peers into the study where the THREE NOBLES sit.

BRACCIANO

Uncivil sir, there's hemlock in thy breath,
And that black slander. Were she a whore of mine,
All thy loud cannons, thy galleys, nor thy sworn
confederates,
Durst not supplant her.

FRANCISCO

Thou hast a wife, our sister; would I had given
Both her white hands to death, when I gave thee
But one.

BRACCIANO

Spit thy poison -

LIGHTNING. Followed by THUNDER. All three sip whiskey.

FRANCISCO

I shall not need; lust carries her sharp whip
At her own girdle. Look to it, for our anger
Is making thunderbolts.

BRACCIANO

Thunder? In faith,
They are but crackers.

OUTSIDE EXT DAY

LIGHTNING. MORE THUNDER. The RAIN drenches FLAMINEO,
scrambling up the side of the house like a spider, trying
to get a look through the window.

STUDY INT DAY

FRANCISCO looks at BRACCIANO coldly.

FRANCISCO

We'll end this with the cannon.

BRACCIANO

You'll get naught by it but iron in your wounds,
And gunpowder in your nostrils.

Little GIOVANNI races in again, riding a toy hourse.

FLAMINEO peers through the transom.

MONTICELSO

No more, my lords. Here comes a champion
Shall end the difference between you both,
Your son, the Prince Giovanni. See, my lords,
What hopes you store in him.

(he tweaks GIOVANNI's cheek;

GIOVANNI squirms)

Now is he apt for knowledge; and for examples,
Whom should he rather strive to imitate
Than his own father?

(to BRACCIANO)

Be his pattern then,
Leave him a stock of virtue that may last,
Should fortune rend his sails, and split his mast.

BRACCIANO

Your hand, boy. Growing to a soldier?

GIOVANNI

Give me a pike.

FRANCISCO

What, practising your pike so young, fair coz?

GIOVANNI

Might not a child of good discretion
Be leader to an army?

FRANCISCO

Yes, cousin, a young prince
Of good discretion might.

BRACCIANO

Forward lapwing!

GIOVANNI

The first year, uncle, that I go to war,
All prisoners that I take I will set free
Without their ransom.

FRANCISCO

Ha, without their ransom!
How then will you reward your soldiers,
That took those prisoners for you?

GIOVANNI

Thus, my lord:
I'll marry them to all the wealthy widows
That fall that year.

FRANCISCO

Why then the next year following
You'll have no men to go with you to war.

GIOVANNI

Why then I'll press the women to the war,
And then the men will follow.

MONTICELSO

Witty prince!

CRASH! Outside, the sound of something falling, several things being smashed.

OUTSIDE EXT DAY

FLAMINEO has fallen from his perch, broken a garbage frame, and overturned a dustbin.

ANGLE ON SECURITY MEN in TUXEDOS

Running across the lawn.

DON FRANCISCO'S STUDY INT DAY

FRANCISCO and BRACCIANO are on their knees beside the little PRINCE. Three generations of noble aristos.

FRANCISCO

See, a good habit makes a child a man,
Whereas a bad one makes a man a beast.
Come, you and I are friends.

He embraces BRACCIANO, and the little PRINCE.

BRACCIANO

Most wishedly,
Like bones which, broke in sunder, and well set,
Knit the more strongly.

ISABELLA enters. FRANCISCO rises.

FRANCISCO

Behold your duchess.
We now will leave you, and expect from you
Nothing but kind entreaty.

BRACCIANO

You have charmed me.

FRANCISCO and MONTICELSO exit, bearing GIOVANNI with them.

BRACCIANO

You are in health, we see.

ISABELLA

And above health,
To see my lord well -

BRACCIANO

So. I wonder much
What amorous whirlwind hurried you here.

ISABELLA

Devotion, my lord.

BRACCIANO

Devotion!
Is your soul charged with any grievous sin?

ISABELLA

'Tis burdened with too many, and I think
The oftener that we cast our reckonings up,
Our sleep will be the sounder.

The suggestion that they be honest with each other is too much for BRACCIANO, who - glaring at her - opens the study door.

FLAMINEO is crouched there, dripping with water, listening. He bows to them both, backs away. BRACCIANO closes the door.

CORRIDOR INT DAY

FLAMINEO tries to be less obvious about his eavedropping. He pulls out his cigarettes; the soaked pack disintergrates.

He pretends to tie his shoes. They are white loafers with no laces.

BRACCIANO O/S

(yelling)

Accursed be your corpulent brother, and the priest
That sang our wedding mass, and even my issue!

ISABELLA O/S

Oh, too too far you have cursed!

BRACCIANO O/S

And this divorce shall be as truly kept
As if the judge had doomed it. Fare you well.

Suddenly the study door opens again. ISABELLA emerges. FLAMINEO bows and scrapes before her. She ignores him.

BRACCIANO

Go, go, complain to the great Duke.

ISABELLA

No, my dear lord,
I'll work peace between you. I will make
Myself the author of your cursed vow;
I have some cause to do it, you have none.
For the weal of both your dukedoms, let the fault
Remain with my supposed jealousy.

ISABELLA gathers herself together, and heads into the -

PARTY INT DAY

- followed by BRACCIANO and FLAMINEO. Rain pours down the glass panels of a huge gazebo, shimmering across the effervescent scene. FLAMINEO shivers.

All the GUESTS are soaked, but this has only contributed to the party atmosphere. They are taking off their shirts, accepting glasses of champagne and fresh white towels from

FRANCISCO's attentive STAFF.

ANGLE ON FRANCISCO

He is not fooled. He sees ISABELLA has been crying.
He glowers at BRACCIANO.

FRANCISCO

Sister - This is not well, my lord - why, sister -
Was your husband loud since we departed?

ISABELLA

By my life, sir, no;
I swear by that I do not care to lose.
Are all these ruins of my former beauty
Laid out for a whore's triumph?

FRANCISCO

What? Turned fury?

ISABELLA

To dig that strumpet's eyes out, let her lie
Some twenty months a-dying, to cut off
Her nose and lips, pull out her rotten teeth,
Preserve her flesh like mummia, for trophies
Of my just anger! Hell, to my affliction,
Is mere snow-water. By your favour, sir -
Brother, draw near, and my lord cardinal -
(to BRACCIANO)
Sir, let me borrow of you but one kiss,
Henceforth I'll never lie with you.

ANGLE ON FLAMINEO

Trying to square this with what he has just overheard.
He thought BRACCIANO was divorcing ISABELLA...

FRANCISCO

How? Never more lie with him?

BRACCIANO

(faking surprise)
Never lie with me?

ISABELLA

And this divorce shall be as truly kept
As if in thronged court a thousand ears
Had heard it, and a thousand lawyers' hands
Sealed to the separation.

FRANCISCO

Now by my birth you are a foolish, mad,
And jealous woman.

BRACCIANO

You see 'tis not my seeking.

FRANCISCO

(ignoring him)

Keep your vow
And take your chamber.

ISABELLA

No, sir, I will not stay a minute.

(glaring at them both)

O that I were a man, or that I had power
To execute my apprehended wishes!
I would whip some with scorpions.

CARDINAL MONTICELSO tries to intercept her, extending his ring.
But ISABELLA is out of there.

MONTICELSO

Oh, good madam!

BRACCIANO

'Twere best to let her have her humour;
Some half day's journey will bring down her stomach,
And then she'll turn in post.

FRANCISCO

To see her come
To my lord for a dispensation
Of her rash vow, will beget excellent laughter.

He and MONTICELSO look at BRACCIANO. No one laughs.
MARCELLO appears, bows to the DUKES.

MARCELLO

Camillo's come, my lord.

FRANCISCO

Where's the commission?

MARCELLO

'Tis here.

FRANCISCO

Give me the signet.

CAMILLO enters. FRANCISCO transacts some business with the
politician, involving commission papers and a signet ring.

FLAMINEO leads his boss, BRACCIANO, aside.

FLAMINEO

My lord, do you mark their whispering?
They're sending him to Naples, but I'll send
him to hell.

Enter DR. JULIO, a white-suited, black-hearted, mafia medic,
with his black bag.

BRACCIANO
About the murder -

FLAMINEO
Here's -

BRACCIANO
Oh, the doctor!

FLAMINEO
A poor quack-salving knave, my lord; he will
shoot pills into a man's guts; he will poison
a kiss; and was once minded for his masterpiece,
because Ireland breeds no poison, to have
prepared a deadly vapour in a Spaniard's
fart, that should have killed all Dublin.

BRACCIANO
Oh, Saint Anthony's fire!

DOCTOR
Your secretary is merry, my lord.

FLAMINEO
O thou cursed antipathy to nature - Let me
embrace thee, toad, and love thee, O thou
abominable, loathsome gargarism!

BRACCIANO
No more - I must employ thee, honest doctor;
You must to Padua, and by the way,
Use some of your skill for us.

DOCTOR
Sir, I shall.

BRACCIANO
But for Camillo?

FLAMINEO
He dies this night by such a politic strain,
Men shall suppose him by his own engine slain.
But for your duchess' death -

DOCTOR
I'll make her sure.

BRACCIANO

Small mischiefs are by greater made secure.

FLAMINEO

(embracing DR. JULIO)

Remember this, you slave: when knaves come
to preferment, they rise as gallows, one
upon another's shoulders.

CELLAR COMPUTER LAB INT NIGHT

Flourscents flicker out of darkness. Enter BRACCIANO and the
DOCTOR, in white labcoats with pen protectors.

BRACCIANO

Now, sir, I claim your promise: 'tis dead midnight,
The time prefixed to show me by your art,
How the intended murder of Camillo,
And our loathed duchess, grow to action.

The DOCTOR boots up his machines. Monitors glow.

DOCTOR

You've won me by your bounty to a deed
I do not often practise. Pray sit down,
Put on this nightcap, sir.

Hands BRACCIANO a pair of headphones. BRACCIANO puts them on.

DOCTOR

And now
I'll show you, by my strong commanding art,
The circumstance that breaks your duchess' heart.

ON THE SCREENS

CCTV footage of the DUCHESS ISABELLA outside her private chapel,
with GIOVANNI, distributing alms.

BRACCIANO watches, excitedly. We can't hear the audio.

PRIVATE CHAPEL INT NIGHT

- hand-held footage of the DOCTOR and CHRISTOPHERO, disguised
as MONKS. They draw the curtain to reveal a large PORTRAIT
OF BRACCIANO, like a Saint, with many candles below it.

ANGLE ON THE DOCTOR AND CHRISTOPHERO

Putting on spectacles of glass, which cover their eyes and

noses. Then they burn perfumes before the picture, and wash the lips of the picture; that done, quenching the fire, and putting off their spectacles, they depart laughing.

ANGLE ON BRACCIANO

Fixated on the images, as -

ISABELLA enters in her night-gown, bedward. She kneels down as to prayers, then draws the curtain of the picture, does three reverences to it, and kisses it thrice.

She faints, and - when the rest rush in - will not suffer them to come near the painting. ISABELLA dies. Sorrow expressed in GIOVANNI. She's conveyed out solemnly.

CELLAR INT NIGHT

BRACCIANO

Excellent! then she's dead.

DOCTOR

She's poisoned
By the fumed picture. 'Twas her custom nightly,
Before she went to bed, to go and visit
Your picture, and to feed her eyes and lips
On the dead shadow: Doctor Julio,
(indicates himself)
Observing this, infects it with an oil,
And other poisoned stuff, which presently
Did suffocate her spirits.

The DOCTOR rewinds the tape so that BRACCIANO can see her choke, again. Then he fires up another SCREEN.

DOCTOR

Now turn another way,
And view Camillo's far more politic fate.
Strike louder, music, from this charmed ground,
To yield, as fits the act, a tragic sound!

He activates his music software - drum machine, eerie Hammond organ sounds. BRACCIANO puts the headphones back on.

ON SCREEN

CCTV - CAMILLO'S AQUARIUM INT DAY

FLAMINEO, MARCELLO, CAMILLO and GIRLS enter.

They are all drunk, and dancing; then CAMILLO announces he must feed his fish. MARCELLO and GIRLS go off to look for a ladder.

FLAMINEO strips off his shirt, invites CAMILLO up onto his shoulders - CAMILLO accepts the bunk-up. He stands on FLAMINEO's back, starts feeding his hungry fish.

ANGLE ON FLAMINEO

Tipping CAMILLO into the PIRHANA TANK.

CAMILLO chokes and hammers on the glass. Pretending to help him, FLAMINEO seizes CAMILLO's legs and forces CAMILLO head-first down into the tank - breaking his neck.

The water turns blood-red, as the pirhanas attack. FLAMINEO finds the fashion magazine, studies his picture.

ANGLE ON MARCELLO & CO.

Returning, with the ladder - too late!

FLAMINEO calls for help; MARCELLO laments -

Fast-forward - CARDINAL MONTICELSO arrives, with ARMED GUARDS.

Fast-forward - FLAMINEO and MARCELLO, arrested.

CELLAR INT NIGHT

BRACCIANO

'Twas quaintly done;
It seems Marcello and Flamineo
Are both committed.

DOCTOR

Yes, you saw them guarded.

Above their heads, HEAVY FOOTSTEPS, and breaking windows.

DOCTOR

And now they're come with purpose to apprehend
Your mistress, fair Vittoria; we are now
Beneath her roof. 'Twere fit we instantly
Make out by some back postern.

BRACCIANO nods, indicates a heavy iron door in the cellar wall. It has a big safe-type wheel on it. BRACCIANO spins the wheel. The iron door swings open.

BRACCIANO

Noble friend,
You bind me ever to you; this shall stand
As the firm seal annexed to my hand.

It shall enforce a payment.

DOCTOR
Sir, I thank you.

The door leads into a long tunnel. BRACCIANO lets DR. JULIO go first.

TUNNEL INT NIGHT

The DOCTOR heads down the tunnel. The walls are concrete, covered in metal spikes.

DOCTOR
Both flowers and weeds spring when the sun is warm,
And great men do great good, or else great harm.

SLAM! He looks back. BRACCIANO has shut the door, trapping DR. JULIO between two closed, metal doors.

CELLAR INT NIGHT

Laughing, BRACCIANO spins the metal wheel the other way.

TUNNEL INT NIGHT

DR. JULIO sees the SPIKED WALLS begin to close in.
He screams.

ANGLE ON BRACCIANO

Gloating, watching CCTV from within the tunnel, as the DOCTOR is crushed.

CGI SHOT 3

CARDINAL MONTICELSO'S TV STUDIOS EXT DAY

1930s wedding-cake facade, surrounded by boxy factory buildings and poisoned streams. In the distance, half-hidden by smog, is the hill covered in palaces and cathedrals.

TV STUDIOS INT DAY

FRANCISCO and MONTICELSO meet on a catwalk, above the hurly-burly of the studio below.

MONTICELSO

Sir, you know we have naught but circumstances
 To charge her with, about her husband's death:
 Their approbation, therefore, to the proofs
 Of her black lust shall make her infamous.
 I wonder if Bracciano will be here?

FRANCISCO

Oh, fie, 'twere impudence too palpable.

CRANE DOWN to the studio floor. Enter the STUDIO AUDIENCE.
 This includes FLAMINEO and MARCELLO, in handcuffs, with POLICE
 ESCORT. ZANCHE appears, also in handcuffed, with a LAWYER.

LAWYER

(studying his brief)

My lord duke and your sister have been very private.

FLAMINEO

You are a dull ass; 'tis threatened they have been
 very public.

LAWYER

If it can be proved they have but kissed one another -

FLAMINEO

What then?

LAWYER

My lord cardinal will ferret them.
 For to sow kisses is to reap lechery;
 and, I am sure, a woman that will endure kissing
 is half won.

FLAMINEO

True, her upper part, by that rule; if you will
 win her neither part too, you know what follows.

The LAWYER doesn't understand. MARCELLO, disgusted,
 elbows FLAMINEO in the ribs.

The GUARDS force the PRISONERS to sit, at the side of the
 STUDIO AUDIENCE. A giant cross is wheeled upstage.

ZANCHE

(re. FLAMINEO)

He doth put on this feigned garb of mirth
 To gull suspicion.

MARCELLO

Oh, my unfortunate sister!
 I would my dagger-point had cleft her heart
 When she first saw Bracciano. You, 'tis said,
 Were made his engine, and his stalking horse,

To undo my sister.

FLAMINEO

I am a kind of path
To her and mine own preferment.

MARCELLO

Your ruin.

FLAMINEO

Hum! thou art a soldier,
Followest the great Duke, feed'st his victories,
What hast got?
The wealth of captains, a poor handful,
Which in thy palm thou bearest, as men hold water -
Seeking to grip it fast, the frail reward
Steals through thy fingers.

MARCELLO

Sir!

FLAMINEO indicates the fabric of his own crumpled, slept-in, expensive suit.

FLAMINEO

Thou hast scarce maintenance
To keep thee in fresh chamois -

The giant cross on the stage lights up. Music.

TV SCREEN - CARDINAL MONTICELSO'S TALK-SHOW

MONTAGE featuring CARDINAL MONTICELSO with CELEBRITY GUESTS, smiling, waving. A TITLE reads, *Today Featuring: The Arraignment of Vittoria Corombona.*

CUT TO VITTORIA

Under the spotlight. In spite of her arrest and travails, she is still confident, beautiful, demure. She wears a Motorcycle Jacket, over an evening gown.

CUT TO MONTICELSO

In the host's chair, in front of the huge glowing cross, on a raised dais which gives him the edge over all his GUESTS. He wears a lot of fake tan, a scarlet velour suit, a red skull-cap, and another big cross. He welcomes -

On his right, a young, keen VATICAN LAWYER (no applause).

On his left, VITTORIA COROMBONA (massive applause - she is

the audience's favourite), and DUKE FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS (some applause, mostly from MARCELLO, POLICE, and SOLDIERS).

STUDIO VOICE

Cinquo, quattro, tre, duo, uno -

As the music dies, there is a bit of a scuffle behind the cameras.

FLOOR MANAGER

Forbear, my lord, here is no place assigned you -

BRACCIANO forces his way past the FLOOR MANAGER, onto the stage.

MONTICELSO

(displeased, yet smiling)

This business, by his Holiness, is left
To our examination.

BRACCIANO

May it thrive with you.

He lays a rich gown under him, and sits, facing VITTORIA.

FRANCISCO

(to the FLOOR MANAGER)

A chair there for his Lordship.

BRACCIANO

Forbear your kindness.

FLAMINEO and ZANCHE applaud. And VITTORIA is clearly pleased that her lover has come through for her in public.

MONTICELCO

(not pleased)

At your pleasure, sir.
Now, signior, fall to your plea.

The VATICAN LAWYER rises. He clears his throat.

VITTORIA

(to FRANCISCO, charming and conversational)

What's he?

FRANCISCO

(equally charming)

A lawyer that pleads against you.

MONTICESLO

Go on, sir.

The LAWYER clears his throat again.

LAWYER

Please connive your judgments to the view
Of this debauched and diversivolent woman,
Who such a black concatenation
Of mischief hath effected -

VITTORIA

What's all this?

LAWYER

Hold your peace!
Exorbitant sins must have exulceration.

BOOS from the AUDIENCE.

VITTORIA

Pray, my lord, let him speak his usual tongue.
I'll make no answer else.

Laughter. Spontaneous APPLAUSE.

MONTICELSO snaps his fingers. They go to a commercial break.
The LAWYER is gone.

MONTICELSO pops pills, receives makeup and a massage.
He looks like the devil -

STUDIO VOICE

5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 -

- yet, as the CAMERA returns to him, he acquires the face
of an angel.

MONTICELSO

I shall be plainer with you, and paint out
Your follies in more natural red and white
Than that upon your cheek.

CUT TO VITTORIA

She raises a hand to her cheek, then laughs.

VITTORIA

O, you mistake.
You raise a blood as noble in this cheek
As ever was your mother's.

MONTICELSO

Observe this creature here,
A woman of a most prodigious spirit -

VITTORIA

It doth not suit a reverend Cardinal
To play the lawyer thus -

MONTICELSO activates his planned attack - on screen behind him appears footage of VITTORIA attending various gala events, with different CELEBRITIES.

MONTICELSO

Who knows not how, when night by night
Her gates were choked with coaches, and her rooms
Outbraved the stars with several kind of lights;
When she did counterfeit a prince's court
In music, banquets, and most riotous surfeits;
This whore forsooth was holy.

VITTORIA

Ha? Whore - what's that?

MONTICELSO smiles. He's got her attention. As he speaks, the montage on the TV MONITORS shows abandoned street children, drug addicts, executions, graveyards, autopsies; intercut with shots of VITTORIA, partying and laughing -

MONTICELSO

Shall I expound whore to you? sure I shall;
I'll give their perfect character. They are first,
Sweetmeats which rot the eater; in man's nostrils
Poisoned perfumes. They are cozening alchemy,
Shipwrecks in calmest weather.

- and VITTORIA, the previous evening, arrested, marched out of her home with only a biker jacket over her shoulders.

MONTICELSO

What are whores?
Cold Russian winters, that appear so barren,
As if that nature had forgot the spring.
They are the true material fire of hell.

ANGLE ON BRACCIANO

Making eyes at VITTORIA. She does not look at him.

VITTORIA

This character escapes me.

CUT TO -

TV CONTROL ROOM INT DAY

- where the TECHNICIANS sweat, and MEN IN SUITS control the proceedings. Switch from MONTICELSO to FRANCISCO is on the

Number One Screen.

FRANCISCO

Your unhappy husband is dead.

VITTORIA

Oh, he's a happy husband!
Now he owes nature nothing.

The TECHNICIANS cue in GRAPHICS.
Behind MONTICELSO and FRANCISCO appear computer-generated simulations questioning the mysterious death of CAMILLO.

FRANCISCO

What a prodigy it was,
That from some two yards' height, a slender man
Should break his neck!

MONTICELSO

In a fish tank!

CUT BACK TO -

TV STUDIO INT DAY

FRANCISCO is on his feet, and on the attack. VITTORIA is hemmed in between him and MONTICELSO, on his extra-high dais: lit by saintly light, his eyes are closed and he appears to be praying.

FRANCISCO

And what's more,
Upon the instant lose all use of speech,
All vital motion. Now mark each circumstance.

MONTICELSO

And look upon this creature was his wife!
She comes not like a widow; she comes armed
With scorn and impudence. Is this a mourning-habit?

MONTICELSO indicates the motorcycle jacket. But VITTORIA stays cool.

VITTORIA

Had I foreknown his death, as you suggest,
I would have bespoke my mourning.

ZANCHE cheers. Scattered APPLAUSE from the AUDIENCE.

MONTICELSO

Oh, you are cunning!

VITTORIA

You shame your wit and judgment
To call it so.

(to the STUDIO AUDIENCE)

These are but feigned shadows of my evils.

(to her ACCUSERS)

Terrify babes, my lord, with painted devils.

For your names

Of whore and murd'ress, they proceed from you,

As if a man should spit against the wind,

The filth returns in's face.

FLAMINEO applauds his sister, rattling his chains.
More APPLAUSE from the AUDIENCE.

MONTICELSO

Pray you, mistress, satisfy me one question:
Who lodged beneath your roof that fatal night
Your husband broke his neck?

BRACCIANO

That question

Enforceth me break silence: I was there.

ALL THE CAMERAS ZOOM IN ON BRACCIANO

Seated on his Elvis cloak. He rises. He wears shades.
BRACCIANO thinks himself pretty cool, and very important.

MONTICELSO

Your business?

BRACCIANO

Why, I came to comfort her,
And take some course for settling her estate,
Because I heard her husband was in debt
To you, my lord.

ALL CAMERAS ZOOM ON MONTICELSO

Who, back-footed, tells the truth.

MONTICELSO

He was.

BRACCIANO

And it was strangely feared
That you would cozen her.

MONTICELSO

Who made you overseer?

BRACCIANO

Why, my charity, my charity, which should flow
From every generous and noble spirit,
To orphans and to widows.

BRACCIANO strides across the stage, stands protectively
over VITTORIA. Murmurs from the AUDIENCE. Applause.

MONTICELSO
Your lust!

FRANCISCO signals another commercial break. MUSIC plays.

BRACCIANO
Cowardly dogs bark loudest, sirrah priest.
I'll talk with you hereafter - do you hear?

His MOBILE PHONE rings. He takes the call, gets involved
in it, and - abandoning VICTORIA - wanders off stage.

MONTICELSO
Ha!

VITTORIA is expressionless. FLAMINEO and ZANCHE, aghast.

FLOOR RUNNER
My lord, your gown -

The RUNNER runs after BRACCIANO, with his Elvis cape.

The STUDIO DOOR slams.

All the cameras turn to MONTICELSO, fresh from another
powdering-down. He smiles, angelic again.

MONTICELSO
Your champion's gone.

VITTORIA
The wolf may prey the better.

The show goes live again. The AUDIENCE has been removed.

FRANCISCO, relaxed in his chair, discusses CAMILLO's death.

FRANCISCO
My lord, there's great suspicion of the murder,
But no sound proof who did it. For my part,
I do not think she hath a soul so black
(indicates VITTORIA)
To act a deed so bloody.

VITTORIA
I discern poison under your gilded pills.

MONTICELSO

Now your duke's gone, I will produce a letter
Wherein 'twas plotted, he and you should meet -

He waves a piece of paper at the CAMERAS.

MONTICELSO

Where after wanton bathing and the heat
Of a lascivious banquet... I pray read it,
I shame to speak the rest.

He hands the paper to FRANCISCO, who shakes his head, gravely.

ANGLE ON FLAMINEO, ZANCHE AND MARCELLO

And their GUARDS. Alone in the auditorium.

VITTORIA

Grant I was tempted;
Temptation to lust proves not the act.
You read his hot love to me, but you want
My frosty answer.

MONTICELSO

Frost in the dog-days! Strange!

VITTORIA

Condemn you me for that a duke did love me?
So may you blame some fair and crystal river,
For that some melancholic distracted man
Hath drowned himself in it.

MONTICELSO

Truly, drowned indeed.

VITTORIA

Sum up my faults, I pray, and you shall find,
That beauty and gay clothes, a merry heart,
And a good stomach to feast, are all,
All the poor crimes that you can charge me with.

MONTICELSO

If the devil
Did ever take good shape, behold his picture.

VITTORIA

You have one virtue left:
You will not flatter me.

A HOSTESS hands the CARDINAL an envelope. RECORDED FANFARE.
He opens it, reads.

MONTICELSO

Here's your sentence: you are confined
 Unto a house of convertites, with your bawd -

FLAMINEO

(alarmed)

Who, I?

Drumbeat.

MONTICELSO

The Moor.

FLAMINEO

Oh, I am a sound man again.

VITTORIA

A house of convertites, what's that?

MONTICELSO

A house of penitent whores.

VITTORIA

Do noblemen

Erect it for their wives, that I am sent

To lodge there?

MONTICELSO

Away with her. Take her hence, too.

He indicates ZANCHE.

MONTICELSO

You, gentlemen, Flamineo and Marcello,
 The court hath nothing now to charge you with,
 Only you must remain upon your sureties
 For your appearance.

FRANCISCO

I stand for Marcello.

FLAMINEO

(indicating the long-gone BRACCIANO)

And my lord duke for me.

TWO POLICEMEN grab VITTORIA.

VITTORIA

A rape! a rape!

The END THEME MUSIC of the show begins. MONTICELSO
 smiles, waves goodbye. The CAMERAS ignore VITTORIA.

FRANCISCO

How?

VITTORIA

Yes, you have ravished justice;
Forced her to do your pleasure.

MONTICELSO

(checking messages, popping pills, smiling)
Fie, she's mad -

VITTORIA

Die with those pills in your most cursed maw
Should bring you health!
Let your own spittle choke you!

VITTORIA is handcuffed.

MONTICELSO

She's turned fury.

The show is over. The COPS take VITTORIA away. MARCELLO and FLAMINEO are freed.

The MAKEUP TEAM remove MONTICELSO's false, white, perfect teeth.

TV STUDIO RECEPTION AREA INT DAY

DON FRANCISCO leaves the building with his STAFF. He finds BRACCIANO waiting in the lobby, still talking on his mobile. BRACCIANO is once again attended by FLAMINEO.

BRACCIANO

Now you and I are friends, sir, we'll shake hands
In a friend's grave, together.

FRANCISCO

Sir, what's the matter?

BRACCIANO

I will not chase more blood from that loved cheek;
You have lost too much already. Fare you well.

He exits. FRANCISCO is mystified.

FRANCISCO

How strange these words sound!
What's the interpretation?

FLAMINEO

(aside, to CAMERA)
Good, this is a preface to the discovery of the

Duchess' death: he carries it well.

GIOVANNI runs up, dressed in black.

FRANCISCO

How now, my noble cousin, what, in black?

GIOVANNI

Yes, uncle, I was taught to imitate you
In virtue, and you must imitate me
In colours of your garments. My sweet mother
Is -

FRANCISCO

How? Where?

GIOVANNI

Is there - no, yonder - indeed, sir,
I'll not tell you,
For I shall make you weep.

FRANCISCO freezes. Caught up in VITTORIA's staged TV trial,
he has not anticipated this.

FRANCISCO

Is dead?

GIOVANNI

Do not blame me now,
I did not tell you so.

FRANCISCO

Dead!

MONTICELSO appears, surrounded by his PEOPLE. He has just heard
the news.

MONTICELSO

Blessed lady, thou art now above thy woes!

FRANCISCO seizes his ring. He is distraught. He crouches
beside the little boy, so they won't see he's crying.

GIOVANNI

What do the dead do, uncle? Do they eat,
Hear music, go a-hunting, and be merry,
As we that live?

FRANCISCO

(covering his eyes)
No, coz; they sleep.

GIOVANNI

Lord, Lord, that I were dead!
 Good God, let her sleep ever!
 I have not slept these six nights.

FRANCISCO weeps.

FRANCISCO
 Oh, all of my poor sister that remains!
 Take him away, for God's sake.

ANGLE ON FLAMINEO

Just as happy as can be. He's out of jail, his enemies are
 counfounded. He'll figure out a way to spring VITTORIA.
 He runs after his master.

CGI SHOT 4

Black clouds overhang the grandest of all the palaces on the
 hill - the MEDICI MANSION. Many stormclouds have piled up.
 A downpour is certain.

MONTICELSO V/O
 Come, come my lord, untie your folded thoughts,
 And let them dangle loose, as a bride's hair.

FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS' STUDY INT DAY

The DUKE and the CARDINAL sit in near-darkness.

MONTICELSO
 Your sister's poisoned.

FRANCISCO
 Far be it from my thoughts
 To seek revenge.
 It is reported you possess a book,
 Wherein you have the names of all notorious offenders
 Lurking about the city -

MONTICELSO
 Sir, I do;
 And some there are which call it my black book.
 Though it teach not
 The art of conjuring, yet in it lurk
 The names of many devils.

FRANCISCO
 Pray let's see it.

JUMP CUT -

MONTICELSO watches as FRANCISCO opens a small, black LAPTOP.

FRANCISCO
Murderers?

MONTICELSO bookmarks the place for him.

MONTICELSO
Pray use it, my lord.

FRANCISCO
I thank you dearly, sir,
You are a worthy member of the state,
And have done infinite good in your discovery
Of these offenders.

MONTICELSO
Somewhat.

HIS POV -- LAPTOP SCREEN

Scrolling through I.D.'s of criminals, halting on LODOVICO -

FRANCISCO
Bracciano, I'm now fit for thy encounter.
Like the wild Irish I'll not think thee dead
Till I can play at football with thy head.

CGI SHOT 5

HOUSE OF CONVERTITES EXT DAY

A down-at-heel nunnery in what was once the countryside,
beside an eight-lane highway, leading to a horizon of FACTORIES.
Far away, a grey hulk almost hidden by dust and industrial
smoke, is the city of palaces.

A LIMOUSINE pulls up outside the convent. FLAMINEO gets out,
and goes to ring the bell.

ZANCHE appears, in a small window set in the big door.

CUT TO -

HOUSE OF CONVERTITES EXT DAY

At the gate, the MATRON interviews BRACCIANO and FLAMINEO.
ZANCHE, in a nun's habit, attends her.

MATRONA

Should it be known the duke hath such recourse
To your imprisoned sister, I were like
To incur much damage by it.

FLAMINEO

Not a scruple.
The Pope lies on his death-bed, and their heads
Are troubled now with other business
Than guarding of a lady.

The MATRON produces the keys to the inner cloisters.

A MOTORCYCLE MESSENGER cruises up, dusty from the highway.

MESSENGER

Matrona, let me speak with you:
I would entreat you to deliver for me
(stage whisper, eyeing FLAMINEO)
This letter to the fair Vittoria.

MATRON

(signing for the letter)
I shall, sir.

MESSENGER

With all care and secrecy.

He rides out. FLAMINEO grabs the letter.

FLAMINEO

How now? What's that?

MATRON

A letter.

FLAMINEO

To my sister? I'll see it delivered.

FLAMINEO tears it open. Reads. BRACCIANO wants to read it,
too.

BRACCIANO

What's that you read, Flamineo?

FLAMINEO

Look.

BRACCIANO

Ha! 'To the most unfortunate,
his best respected Vittoria'.
Who was the messenger?

ZANCHE

I know not.

BRACCIANO

No! who sent it?

FLAMINEO

Ud's foot!

BRACCIANO

(grabbing the letter)

I'll open it, were it her heart. What's here -
'Florence'? This juggling is gross and palpable.
Read it, read it.

FLAMINEO studies the note. He reads aloud.

FLAMINEO

"Your tears I'll turn to triumphs, be but mine..."
Wine, my lord, would better serve his turn.

(increasingly mocking)

"Your sad imprisonment I'll soon uncharm,
And with a princely uncontrolled arm
Lead you to Florence, where my love and care
Shall hang your wishes in my silver hair."
A halter on his strange equivocation!

BRACCIANO

God's death! I'll cut her into atomies,
And let the irregular north-wind sweep her up,
And blow her into his nostrils:

(shouting at ZANCHE)

Where's this whore?

ZANCHE

That - ? What do you call her?

BRACCIANO

Oh, I could be mad!
Prevent the cursd disease she'll bring me to,
And tear my hair off. Where's this changeable stuff?

FLAMINEO, the intelligencer, knows the letter is a fake.
He's shocked that his employer is so quickly tricked by it.

FLAMINEO

O'er head and ears in water, I assure you;
She is not for your wearing.

BRACCIANO attempts to march FLAMINEO into the convent.

BRACCIANO

In, you pander!

FLAMINEO

What me, my lord? Am I your dog?

BRACCIANO

A bloodhound. Do you brave?

BRACCIANO tries to push FLAMINEO inside. But FLAMINEO has had enough.

BRACCIANO

Would you be kicked?

FLAMINEO

Would you have your neck broke?

BRACCIANO understands the reference to CAMILLO. Not only is he astonished that his secretary is standing up to him, he is also afraid. So he puffs out his chest -

BRACCIANO

Do you know me?

FLAMINEO

Oh, my lord, methodically!
As in this world there are degrees of evils,
So in this world there are degrees of devils.
You're a great duke, I your poor secretary.

BRACCIANO

Pander, ply your convoy, and leave your prating.

FLAMINEO

All your kindness to me is like that miserable
courtesy of the Cyclops to Ulysses - you reserve
me to be devoured last.

(sighing)

Lead us to her.

They follow the MATRON into the -

CONVENT INT DAY

VITTORIA is blamelessly seated among the other NUNS. She wears a WHITE HABIT. All are watching the MONTICELSO'S TV CHANNEL, for news of the new POPE. BRACCIANO thrusts the letter at VITTORIA.

BRACCIANO

Can you read, mistress? Look upon that letter;
There are no characters, nor hieroglyphics.
You need no comment, I am grown your receiver -

God's precious, you shall be a brave great lady,
A stately and advanced whore.

The NUNS stare at him. VICTORIA considers her reply.

VITTORIA
Say, sir?

BRACCIANO
Come, come, let's see your cabinet, discover
Your treasury of love-letters. Death and furies,
I'll see them all.

WIPE TO -

VITTORIA'S CELL INT DAY

BRACCIANO rages about VITTORIA's cell. She has no cabinet,
no treasury of love-letters, Nor anything else.

VITTORIA
Sir, upon my soul,
I have not any.
(she studies the letter)
Whence was this directed?

BRACCIANO is confused. He doesn't know.

FLAMINEO enters the tiny room. ZANCHE hovers at the door.

FLAMINEO
Ware hawk, my lord.

VITTORIA
(reading)
Florence! this is some treacherous plot, my lord -

BRACCIANO
Right! They are plots.
Your beauty! O, ten thousand curses on it!
How long have I beheld the devil in crystal?
Thou hast led me, like an heathen sacrifice,
With music, and with fatal yokes of flowers,
To my eternal ruin.
(he starts crying, out of
pity for himself)
Woman to man is either a god, or a wolf.

VITTORIA
My lord -

BRACCIANO

Away!
 We'll be as differing as two adamants,
 The one shall shun the other. What? Dost weep?

FLAMINEO sees his sister is crying. But she makes no sound.

FLAMINEO
 Fie, my lord!

BRACCIANO
 Oh, my sweetest duchess,
 How lovely art thou now! I was bewitched;
 (to VITTORIA)
 For all the world speaks ill of thee.

VITTORIA eyes BRACCIANO with contempt.

VITTORIA
 No matter;
 I'll live so now, I'll make that world recant,
 And change her speeches. You did name your duchess.

BRACCIANO
 Whose death God pardon!

VITTORIA
 Whose death God revenge
 On thee, most gutless duke!

FLAMINEO
 Now for two whirlwinds.

VITTORIA
 What have I gained by thee, but infamy?
 You've stained the spotless honour of my house,
 And frightened thence noble society.
 What do you call this house?
 Is this your palace? Did not the judge style it
 A house of penitent whores? Who sent me to it?
 To this incontinent college? Is it not you?
 Is this your high preferment? Go, go, brag
 How many ladies you have undone, like me.

ANGLE ON BRACCIANO

His false tears have dried up. He turns to FLAMINEO,
 who blanks him. VITTORIA faces the wall.

BRACCIANO
 I have drunk Lethe. Vittoria?
 My dearest happiness? Vittoria?
 What do you ail, my love? Why do you weep?
 Are not those matchless eyes mine?

VICTORIA doesn't answer. Wearily, FLAMINEO tries to help his master.

FLAMINEO
Turn to my lord, good sister.

VITTORIA
Hence, you pander!

FLAMINEO
Pander! Am I the author of your sin?

VITTORIA
Yes; he's a base thief that a thief lets in.

FLAMINEO
We're blown up, my lord -

BRACCIANO sweeps his cape aside, and goes down on one knee before VITTORIA.

BRACCIANO
Will you hear me?

VITTORIA
Never.

She stalks out of the room. BRACCIANO stares helplessly after her. FLAMINEO pulls BRACCIANO to his feet -

FLAMINEO
Come, come, you have wronged her;
What a strange credulous man were you, my lord,
To think the Duke of Florence would love her?
Will any mercer take another's ware
When once 'tis towsed and sullied?

He pushes BRACCIANO out after her, into the -

CLOISTERS INT DAY

Excitement all around. On the VATICAN TV, white smoke appears, and fanfares are heard.

TV ANNOUNCER
(on screen)
The lord cardinals
Are busied 'bout electing of the Pope.
They've given over scrutiny, and are fallen
To admiration.

BRACCIANO pursues VITTORIA, on his knees again.
He threatens, unconvincingly, to pull his eyes out.

BRACCIANO
Shall these eyes,
Which have so long time dwelt upon your face,
Be now put out?

FLAMINEO
Hand her, my lord, and kiss her.

BRACCIANO
Let us renew right hands.

He attempts to hold VITTORIA's hand. See's he's still
wearing his wedding ring - hastily pulls it off.

VITTORIA
Hence!

BRACCIANO
Never shall rage, or the forgetful wine,
Make me commit like fault.
Be thou at peace with me.

FLAMINEO
(to VITTORIA)
Mark his penitence;
Best natures do commit the grossest faults,
When they're given over to jealousy, as best wine,
Dying, makes strongest vinegar.

VITTORIA
O ye dissembling men!

FLAMINEO
We sucked that, sister,
From women's breasts, in our first infancy.

VITTORIA
To add misery to misery!

BRACCIANO
Sweetest!

VITTORIA
Am I not low enough?
Ay, ay, your good heart gathers like a snowball,
Now your affection's cold.

FLAMINEO
Ud's foot, it shall melt
To a heart again.

VITTORIA

Your dog or hawk should be rewarded better
Than I have been. I'll speak not one word more.

VITTORIA sits down beneath a carved skull and crossbones,
at the end of the cloister. She wraps her arms around her
knees, closes her eyes.

FLAMINEO

Stop her mouth
With a sweet kiss, my lord.

BRACCIANO tries to hug and kiss VITTORIA. She ignores him.
FLAMINEO presses on with his optimistic commentary, regardless.

FLAMINEO

So, now the tide's turned the vessel's come about.
He's a sweet armful.

BRACCIANO

That you should chide thus!

He punches VITTORIA's arm. Still she ignores him.

FLAMINEO

My lord, supply your promises with deeds;
You know that painted meat no hunger feeds.

BRACCIANO tries to embrace her -
VITTORIA scratches his face. She tears off down the cloister,
past the TV where DON FRANCISCO is being interviewed.

FRANCISCO

(on screen)

I'll lay a thousand ducats you hear news
Of a Pope presently - hark; sure he's elected -

BRACCIANO

Soft; the same project which the Duke of Florence,
(Whether in love or gullery I know not)
Laid down for her escape, will I pursue.

FLAMINEO

And no time fitter than this night, my lord.
The Pope being dead, and all the cardinals entered
The conclave, for electing a new Pope;
The city in a great confusion;
We may lay her post-horse, and away for Padua.

BRACCIANO indicates the exhausted VITTORIA, surrounded by
CONVERTITES, all giving him the evil eye.

BRACCIANO

I'll instantly steal forth the Prince Giovanni,
And make for Padua. You two with your old mother,
And young Marcello that attends on Florence,
If you can work him to it, follow me.

I will advance you all;

(calls to VITTORIA, but
dares not approach her)

For you, Vittoria, think of a duchess' title!

FLAMINEO gives VITTORIA the thumbs-up.

FLAMINEO

Lo you, sister!

(grabs BRACCIANO's arm)

Stay, my lord; I'll tell you a tale.

CARTOON MUSIC is heard. BRACCIANO stares at FLAMINEO,
strangely entranced. There follows a -

CARTOON SEQUENCE - NARRATED BY FLAMINEO

Depicting a fierce cartoon crocodile, and a cute little bird.

FLAMINEO V/O

The crocodile, which lives in the River Nilus,
hath a worm breeds in the teeth of it, which puts
him to extreme anguish: a little bird, no bigger
than a wren, is barber-surgeon to this crocodile;
flies into the jaws of it, picks out the worm,
and brings present remedy. The fish, glad of ease,
but ungrateful to her that did it, closeth his chaps,
intending to swallow her. But nature, loathing
such ingratitude, hath armed this bird with a
quill or prick on the head, which wounds the
crocodile in the mouth, forceth him open his
bloody prison, and away flies the pretty
tooth-picker from her cruel patient.

The CARTOON ends. BRACCIANO and FLAMINEO are left, lolling
into space. BRACCIANO is entertained, excited, but uneasy.

BRACCIANO

Your application is, I have not rewarded
The service you have done me.

FLAMINEO

No, my lord.

My sister is the crocodile: she's blemished in her
fame, my lord cures it; and though the comparison
hold not in every particle, yet observe, remember,
what good the bird with the prick in the head hath
done you, and scorn ingratitude.

He sighs. And turns to the CAMERA.

FLAMINEO

It may appear to some ridiculous
Thus to talk knave and madman, and sometimes
Come in with a dried sentence, stuffed with sage.
But this allows my varying of shapes:
Knaves do grow great by being great men's apes.

DE MEDICIS SCREENING ROOM INT DAY

DON FRANCISCO watches live TV from St Peter's Square.
Expressionless, sipping his martini.

He activates to the speaker phone.

FRANCISCO

Vittoria Corombona
Is stolen from the House of Convertites
By Bracciano, and they're fled the city -

ST PETER'S SQUARE EXT DAY

Clad all in WHITE, the NEW POPE - MONTIECELLO - addresses a huge
THRONG.

MONTICELLO

- Now, though this be the first day of our seat,
We cannot better please the divine power,
Than to sequester from the holy church
These cursed persons. Make it therefore known,
We do denounce excommunication
Against them both; all that are theirs in Rome
We likewise banish.

CGI SHOT 6

URSINI CHAPEL AND GROUNDS, PADUA EXT DAY

A white, wedding-cake cathedral, beneath a sunny sky. Bells.

CHAPEL INT DAY

VITTORIA AND BRACCIANO'S WEDDING.

Despite the neighbouring state's hostility, it is a big affair,
exclusively reported by a CELEBRITY TV CHANNEL. VITTORIA is
angelic in her WHITE WEDDING DRESS. BRACCIANO, not to be

outdone, wears a white leather jumpsuit. Among the guests are FLAMINEO, MARCELLO, CORNELIA, and ZANCHE. ZANCHE is clearly fascinated by another guest: a man in LONG, WHITE ARAB DRESS - MULINASSAR - attended by two SERVANTS in priests' robes.

FLAMINEO

In all the weary minutes of my life,
Day ne'er broke up till now. This marriage
Confirms me happy.

MARCELLO

'Tis a good assurance.
Saw you not yet the Moor that's come to court?

FLAMINEO

Yes, and conferred with him in my duke's closet.
I have not seen a goodlier personage,
Nor ever talked with man better experienced
In state affairs, or rudiments of war.

MARCELLO

Is the Moor a Christian?

FLAMINEO

He is.

MARCELLO

Why proffers he his service to your duke?

FLAMINEO turns his head slowly towards his BROTHER.
Even drunk, he knows MARCELLO is on a fishing expedition.

FLAMINEO

Because he understands there's like to grow
Some wars between us and your Duke of Florence,
In which he hopes employment.

MARCELLO nods. He's drunk, and knows this too.

FLAMINEO

I never saw one in a stern bold look
Wear more command. He talks
As if he'd travelled all the princes' courts
Of Christendom; in all things strives to express how
Glories, like glow-worms, afar off shine bright,
But, looked to near, have neither heat nor light.
The duke -

BRACCIANO, very drunk, welcomes - for the fourth or fifth time - his guest MULINASSAR. MULINASSAR's face is almost entirely hidden by his white headdress, thick, black beard, and Wayfarers.

BRACCIANO

You are nobly welcome. We have heard at full
Your honourable service against the Turk.
To you, brave Mulinassar, we assign
A competent pension!

Applause from the COURTIERS. MULINASSAR answers, bowing,
with a mumbling, thick accent. He is FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS,
in disguise.

BRACCIANO presses on, visiting his many other GUESTS.

ANGLE ON FRANCISCO

Watching him go. FLAMINEO, MARCELLO and ZANCHE sit at his
table.

MARCELLO

Why doth this devil haunt you, say?

FLAMINEO

'Tis not so great a cunning as men think,
To raise the devil, for here's one up already,
The greatest cunning were to lay him down -

FLAMINEO and ZANCHE laugh and kiss. MARCELLO is drunk and
pissed off by BRACCIANO's celebrations. He too simple a
courtier to recognise his own Duke, FRANCISCO, in disguise.

MARCELLO

She is your shame.

FLAMINEO

I pray thee pardon her.
In faith, you see, women are like to burs;
Where their affection throws them, there they'll stick.

ZANCHE

(eyeing FRANCISCO)

That is my countryman, a goodly person;
When he's at leisure, I'll discourse with him
In our own language.

But FLAMINEO buttonholes "MULINASSAR" first -

FLAMINEO

How is it, brave soldier? O that I had seen
Some of your iron days! I pray relate
Some of your service to us.

FRANCISCO

'Tis a ridiculous thing for a man to be his
own chronicle.

MARCELLO

You're too stoical. The duke will expect other discourse from you.

FRANCISCO

I shall never flatter him. I have studied man too much to do that; what difference is between the duke and I? No more than between two bricks; all made of one clay. Only one is placed on top of a turret, the other in the bottom of a well.

MARCELLO

(intervening, drunkenly)
I have been a soldier too.

FRANCISCO

How have you thrived?

MARCELLO

Faith, poorly.

FRANCISCO

That's the misery of peace.

FLAMINEO

Give me a fair room yet hung with arras, and some great cardinal to lug me by the ears, as his endeared minion!

They laugh, but FLAMINEO really means this. It is his golden dream.

FRANCISCO

And you may do the devil knows what villainy.

FLAMINEO

And safely.

FRANCISCO

Right.

The sound of ENGINES is heard. A PHALANX of brightly-painted RACING MOTORCYCLES glides through the party. FLAMINEO leads the WEDDING GUESTS towards the adjacent -

MOTODROME EXT DAY

A big oval of asphalt, on which anything from go-karts to Concorde can be raced around, and around. DUKES, young and old, are donning fluorescent Boy Racer jumpsuits, climbing aboard their motorbikes and fast cars.

FLAMINEO

I will now give you some politic instruction.
The Duke says he will give you pension; that's
but bare promise, get it under his hand.
How now, gallants; are they ready?

MECHANIC

Yes; the lords are putting on their armour.

ANGLE ON BRACCIANO

And other LORDS, donning their race gear. ZANCHE directs
a group of BIKINI GIRLS, in the URSINI race colours, to
surround the RACERS, and be photographed.

ANGLE ON FLAMINEO

Staring at ZANCHE.

MARCELLO

Look you, yonder's your sweet mistress.

FLAMINEO

Thou art my sworn brother - I'll tell thee,
I do love that Moor, that witch, very
constrainedly; she knows some of my villainy;
I do love her just as a man holds a wolf by
the ears. But for fear of her turning upon
me, and pulling out my throat, I would let
her go to the devil.

MARCELLO

I hear she claims marriage of thee.

FLAMINEO

'Faith, I made to her some such dark promise -
Now, my precious gipsy!

ZANCHE

Ay, your love to me rather cools than heats.
You remember your oaths.

ANGLE ON CORNELIA

wearing a big hat, having imbibed freely of the punch bowl.

CORNELIA

Is this your perch, you haggard? Fly to th'stews.

She strikes ZANCHE. FLAMINEO quickly intervenes.

FLAMINEO

You should be clapped by the heels now:
strike in the court!

ZANCHE

She's good for nothing but to make her maids
Catch cold a'nights.

MARCELLO

You're a strumpet, an impudent one.

He kicks ZANCHE. She kicks him back. FLAMINEO separates them.

FLAMINEO

Why do you kick her? Say!

MARCELLO

She brags that you shall marry her.

FLAMINEO

What then?

MARCELLO

I had rather she were pitched upon a stake,
In some new-seeded garden, to affright
Her fellow crows thence.

FLAMINEO

You're a boy, a fool,
Be guardian to your hound; I am of age.

MARCELLO

If I take her near you, I'll cut her throat.

FLAMINEO

With a fan of feathers?

MARCELLO

And, for you - I'll whip
This folly from you.

They fight. FLAMINEO, the older brother, gets MARCELLO on
the ground, gives him a couple of kicks.

ZANCHE

Oh, your brother!

FLAMINEO

Hang him.
I do suspect my mother played foul play
When she conceived thee.

MARCELLO

Those words I'll make thee answer

With thy heart blood.

MARCELLO pulls his knife - but FLAMINEO is ready for him.
He grabs MARCELLO's arm, twists it, seizes the BLADE.

FLAMINEO

Do; you wrong me most that ought to offend me least.
You know where you shall find me.

MARCELLO

Very good.

ALL SPLIT in different directions.

GARDEN EXT DAY

In an idyllic garden, in the grounds of BRACCIANO's estate,
CORNELIA confronts MARCELLO.

CORNELIA

I hear a whispering you are to fight.
Who is your opposite? What is the quarrel?

MARCELLO

'Tis an idle rumour.

CORNELIA

Will you dissemble? Sure you do not well
To fright me thus; you never look thus pale,
But when you are most angry.

Suddenly we see this charming scene from the P.O.V. of
someone spying on MOTHER and SON: a murderer lying-in-wait...

MARCELLO

'Tis not so.
Was not this crucifix my father's?

CORNELIA

Yes.

MARCELLO

I have heard you say, giving my brother suck,
He took the crucifix between his hands
And broke a limb off.

CORNELIA

Yes, but 'tis mended.

FLAMINEO

I have brought your weapon back.

Before MARCELLO can turn, FLAMINEO steps out of the bushes, runs him through with his own SWITCHBLADE.

CORNELIA
Ha, O my horror!

MARCELLO
You have brought it home, indeed.

CORNELIA
Help! O, he's murdered!

FLAMINEO
I'll to sanctuary,
And send a surgeon to you.

He runs off. MULINASSAR's "priestly" GUARDS appear.

MARCELLO
Oh, mother, now remember what I told
Of breaking of the crucifix - farewell -

He dies. JUMP CUT -

BRACCIANO, in his flourescent racing outfit, attended by FLAMINEO, arrives on the scene.

CORNELIA
Oh, my perpetual sorrow!

BRACCIANO
Was this your handiwork?

FLAMINEO
It was my misfortune.

CORNELIA
He lies, he lies! He did not kill him!

BRACCIANO
Have comfort, my grieved mother.

CORNELIA
Let me go, let me go.

She runs at FLAMINEO with the KNIFE drawn, but, coming to him, lets it fall.

CORNELIA
The God of heaven forgive thee.
I have scarce breath to number twenty minutes;
I'd not spend that in cursing. Fare thee well.
Half of thyself lies there.

BRACCIANO

Mother, pray tell me
How came he by his death? What was the quarrel?

CORNELIA

Indeed, my younger boy presumed too much
Upon his manhood; gave him bitter words;
Drew his sword first; and so, I know not how,
For I was out of my wits, he fell with's head
Just in my bosom.

ANGLE ON A PAGE

Astonished that CORDELIA, like ISABELLA, is lying to protect
a MURDERER.

PAGE

That is not true, madam.

CORNELIA

I pray thee peace.
One arrow's grazed already;
(embraces FLAMINEO)
It were vain
To lose this, for that will never be found again.

ANGLE ON MULINASSAR'S TWO SERVANTS

In the bushes, dropping their priestly robes. Beneath,
they wear paramedics' uniforms. One of them sprays the
inside of a CRASH HELMET with poison.

BRACCIANO

Go, bear the body to Cornelia's lodging:
And we command that none acquaint our duchess
With this sad accident. For you, Flamineo,
Hark you, I will not grant your pardon.

FLAMINEO

No?

BRACCIANO

Only a lease of your life. And that shall last
But for one day. Thou shalt be forced each evening
To renew it, or be hanged.

FLAMINEO

(bowing low)
At your pleasure.
Your will is law now, I'll not meddle with it.

BRACCIANO

(to FLAMINEO)

You once did brave me in your sister's lodging:
I'll now keep you in awe for it. Where's our helmet?

ANGLE ON BRACCIANO'S MECHANIC

Running up with his CRASH HELMET.

ANGLE ON FRANCISCO/MULINASSAR

Ushered into the V.I.P. enclosure.

FRANCISCO

He calls for his destruction.
This shall his passage to the black lake further:
The last good deed he did, he pardoned murder.

MOTODROME EXT DAY

Very bright, overexposed - the super-exaggerated colour of
MOTOR RACING or ADVERTISING or FASHION FOOTAGE from the SIXTIES.

A shot! The RACE CARS and BIKES tear off.

Thrilling RACING FOOTAGE.

Then BRACCIANO loses control, screeches off the track into
a barrier. A wheel goes spinning. BRACCIANO'S PEOPLE,
including FLAMINEO and VITTORIA, race to his vehicle.

BRACCIANO

(screaming)

God's death, tear off my helmet!

FLAMINEO

Are you hurt, my lord?

BRACCIANO

O, my brain's on fire!

The MECHANIC, responsible for the helmet, appears.

BRACCIANO

The helmet is poisoned!

MECHANIC

My lord, upon my soul -

BRACCIANO

Away with him to torture.
There are some great ones that have hand in this,
And near about me.

ANGLE ON FRANCISCO/MULINASSAR

Watching as VITTORIA runs up to BRACCIANO. Post-wedding, she's clad like JACKIE K - pink dress, pink pill-box hat, red roses.

VITTORIA
O, my loved lord! Poisoned?

FLAMINEO
Call the physicians.

The PARAMEDICS, in their helmets and uniforms, shoulder him roughly aside.

FLAMINEO
A plague upon you!

BRACCIANO
O I am gone already; the infection
Flies to the brain and heart. O thou strong heart!
There's such a covenant between the world and it,
They're loath to break.

GIOVANNI, in a tiny racing outfit exactly like his DAD's, runs up.

GIOVANNI
O my most loved father!

BRACCIANO
Remove the boy away.
Where's this good woman? Had I infinite worlds,
They were too little for thee: must I leave thee?
What say you, screech-owls, is the venom mortal?

PARAMEDIC
Most deadly.

BRACCIANO
Most corrupted politic hangman!
I that have given life to offending slaves,
And wretched murderers, have I not power
To lengthen mine own a twelvemonth?
(to VITTORIA)
Do not kiss me, for I shall poison thee.
This unction's sent from the great Duke of Florence.

FRANCISCO
Sir, be of comfort.

BRACCIANO
O thou soft natural death, that art joint-twin

To sweetest slumber! The dull owl
 Bears not against thy casement; the hoarse wolf
 Scents not thy carrion: pity winds thy corpse,
 Whilst horror waits on princes.

VITTORIA
 I am lost for ever.

BRACCIANO
 How miserable a thing it is to die
 'Mongst women howling!

But VITTORIA is not howling. She stands, alone and silent,
 in the expanding throng.

AN AMBULANCE PULLS UP.

The DRIVER opens the AMBULANCE DOORS.

The PARAMEIDCS walk BRACCIANO towards their vehicle.

BRACCIANO
 On pain of death, let no man name death to me:
 It is a word infinitely terrible.

ANGLE ON FLAMINEO AND FRANCISCO

At the edge of the crowd, as a TV CREW with lights arrives.

FLAMINEO
 To see what solitariness is about dying princes.
 As heretofore they have unpeopled towns, divorced
 friends, and made great houses unhospitable, so now,
 O justice! where are their flatterers now?

FRANCISCO
 Come, you have thrived well under him.

FLAMINEO
 'Faith, like a wolf in a woman's breast; I have
 been fed with poultry: but for money, understand me,
 I had as good a will to cozen him as any officer;
 but I had not cunning enough to do it.

FRANCISCO
 Oh, speak well of the duke!

FLAMINEO
 I have done.

REPORTERS pursue BRACCIANO into the AMBULANCE.

REPORTER

How is it with the duke?

PARAMEDIC

Most deadly ill.

He hath conferred the whole state of the dukedom
Upon Vittoria, till the prince arrive
At mature age.

SENSATION. FLASHBULBS.

FLAMINEO

There's some good luck in that yet.

FRANCISCO

See, here he comes.

ANGLE ON BRACCIANO, his face seething with poison, stumbling
back out of the ambulance. They can't restrain him.

FRANCISCO

There's death in his face already.

VITTORIA

O my good lord!

BRACCIANO

Away, you have abused me: you have
Bought and sold offices, oppressed the poor,
And I never dreamt on it. Make up your accounts,
I'll now be mine own steward.

(falls to his knees, in reverence)

Yonder's a fine slave come in now.

FLAMINEO

Where?

BRACCIANO

Why, there,
In a blue bonnet, and a pair of breeches
With a great codpiece. Ha, ha, ha,
Look you, his codpiece is stuck full of pins,
With pearls on the head of them. Do you not know him?

FLAMINEO

No, my lord.

BRACCIANO

Why, 'tis the devil.
I'll dispute with him. He's a rare linguist.

VITTORIA

My lord, here's nothing.

BRACCIANO

Nothing? Rare! Nothing! There is nothing -
I'll not be used thus.

VITTORIA

O! Lie still, my lord!

BRACCIANO

See, see, Flamineo, that killed his brother,
Is dancing on the ropes there, and he carries
A money-bag in each hand, to keep him even,
For fear of breaking's neck. What's she?

The GROUP presses in on BRACCIANO and his ATTENDANTS.
More PHOTOGRAPHERS arrive. CAMERAS and MICROPHONES are
thrust at FLAMINEO, his spokesman.

FLAMINEO

Vittoria, my lord.

BRACCIANO

Ha, ha, ha. Her hair is sprinkled with orris powder,
That makes her look as if she had sinned in the pastry.

BRACCIANO seems near his end. The PARAMEDICS strap him
onto a gurney.

BRACCIANO

I'll do a miracle, I'll free the court
From all foul vermin. Where's Flamineo?

ANGLE ON THE CROWD

All the PHOTOGRAPHERS and COURTIERS stare at FLAMINEO.

FLAMINEO

(to CAMERA)

I do not like that he names me so often,
Especially on his death-bed; 'tis a sign
I shall not live long.

(aloud, with great concern)

See, he's near his end.

PARAMEDIC

Pray, give us leave.

They roll the raving BRACCIANO back into the AMBULANCE.

FRANCISCO/MULINASSAR, produces a crucifix and thrusts it
after him.

FRANCISCO

He is departing: let us stand all apart -

AMBULANCE INT DAY

The 'PARAMEDICS' attack BRACCIANO. They are FRANCISCO'S HENCHMEN - LODOVICO and GASPARO.

LODOVICO
Devil Bracciano, thou art damned.

GASPARO
Perpetually.

LODOVICO
Now thou shalt die like a poor rogue.

GASPARO
And stink
Like a dead fly-blown dog.

LODOVICO
And be forgotten
Before the funeral sermon.

Suddenly BRACCIANO, who has seemed near death, sits bolt upright, snapping his bonds.

BRACCIANO
Vittoria? Vittoria!

LODOVICO
Oh, the cursed devil -

GASPARO
Strangle him in private -

The doors fly open. VITTORIA and ATTENDANTS try to enter. GASPARO pushes them back as LODOVICO throws a noose round BRACCIANO's throat.

LODOVICO
You would prate, sir? This is a true-love knot
Sent from the Duke of Florence.

AMBULANCE EXT DAY

VITTORIA, FLAMINEO and all the COURTIERS struggle to peer inside, rocking the ambulance. GASPARO tries to close the doors.

FLAMINEO
See how firmly he doth fix his eye

Upon the crucifix.

VITTORIA

Oh, hold it constant!
It settles his wild spirits; and so his eyes
Melt into tears.

AMBULANCE INT DAY

BRACCIANO is strangled.

GASPARO

What, is it done?

LODOVICO

(whispered)
The snuff is out.

MOTODROME EXT DAY

LODOVICO steps out, pulls off his surgical mask, mops his brow.

LODOVICO

My lords, he's dead.

VITTORIA and the rest cross themselves.

ALL

Rest to his soul!

ANGLE ON VITTORIA

Surrounded by SYCOPHANTS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, the trashy-bright uniforms and coloured billboards.

VITTORIA

O me! this place is hell.

FRANCISCO

(taking her picture with his phone-cam)
How heavily she takes it!

FLAMINEO

(glad that the PAPERAZZI have
his SISTER in their sights)
Oh, yes, yes;
Had women navigable rivers in their eyes,
They would dispense them all. I'll tell thee
These are but Moorish shades of griefs or fears;
There's nothing sooner dry than women's tears.

FRANCISCO

Sure this was Florence' doing.

FLAMINEO

Very likely:

Those are found weighty strokes which come from the hand,
But those are killing strokes which come from the head.
O, the rare tricks of a Machivillian!

A FUNERAL CORTEGE has begun. VITTORIA walks solemnly, head bowed, behind the slow-moving AMBULANCE. She is followed by all the other COURTIERS, the PRESS, and the POLICE, in a long slow circuit of the MOTODROME.

Never one to miss a party, FLAMINEO runs after the CORTEGE, waving and shouting.

ANGLE ON GASPARO

Driving the AMBULANCE.

ANGLE ON FRANCISCO/MULINASSAR

Walking in the CORTEGE. ZANCHE falls into step beside him.

FRANCISCO

You're passionately met in this sad world.

ZANCHE

Let those weep,
That guiltily partake in the sad cause.
I knew last night, by a sad dream I had,
Some mischief would ensue; yet to say truth
My dream most concerned you.

CUT TO -

ZANCHE'S DREAM TENT INT NIGHT

Within which ZANCHE and MULINASSAR are surrounded by pillows, rich fabrics, and mosquito nets.

ZANCHE V/O

Methought, sir, you came stealing to my bed.

FRANCISCO V/O

Wilt thou believe me, sweeting? by this light
I was a-dreamt on thee too; for methought
I saw thee naked.

ZANCHE V/O

Fie, sir! as I told you,
Methought you lay down by me.

FRANCISCO V/O
So dreamt I;
And lest thou shouldst take cold, I covered thee
With this mantle. Thou didst laugh
Exceedingly, methought.

ZANCHE V/O
Laugh!

FRANCISCO V/O
And criedst out, the hair did tickle thee.

ZANCHE V/O
There was a dream indeed!

FRANCISCO embraces ZANCHE. Within the dream, they speak.

FRANCISCO
You did tell me you would reveal a secret.

ZANCHE
Come, sir; good fortune tends you; Isabella,
The Duke Francisco's sister, was poisoned
By a fumed picture; and Camillo's neck
Was broke by damned Flamineo.

CUT TO -

MOTODROME EXT DAY

FRANCISCO and ZANCHE pause. The rest of the CORTEGE -
including PENITENTES, PROFESSIONAL MOURNERS, and MARCHERS
from SEMANA SANTA - passes them by.

FRANCISCO
(finally)
Most strange!

ZANCHE
Most true.

FRANCISCO
Thou kept their counsel.

ZANCHE
Sadly, I confess -
For which, urged with contrition, I intend
This night to rob Vittoria.
In coin and jewels

I shall at least make good unto your use
An hundred thousand crowns.

FRANCISCO
Oh, noble wench!

ZANCHE
It is a dowry,
Methinks, should make that sun-burnt proverb false,
And wash the Ethiop white.

FRANCISCO
It shall; away.

ZANCHE
Be ready for our flight.

FRANCISCO
An hour before day.

ZANCHE takes off.

BRACCIANO'S MANSION INT DAY

BRACCIANO's sitting room - filled with gangster art and
stripey furniture. AL CAPONE's car. Braces of DUELLING
PISTOLS mounted on the walls.

FLAMINEO and GASPARO are both drunk and exhausted. They
are supposed to be guarding the orphan GIOVANNI, playing
with his computer game beneath a sliced-in-half-shark.

GASPARO
(burps)
The young duke: did you ever see a sweeter prince?

FLAMINEO
I have known a poor woman's bastard better favoured.
This is behind him; now, to his face, all comparisons
were hateful -
(realises GIOVANNI is listening)
- My gracious lord.

GIOVANNI
I pray leave me, sir.

FLAMINEO
Your grace must be merry; 'tis I have cause to mourn;
for what said the little boy that rode behind his
father on horseback?

GIOVANNI stares at FLAMINEO. He can't believe this.

He's only ten, his father is dead, he hates this creep to begin with, and yet the idiot just won't leave him alone.

GIOVANNI

Why, what said he?

FLAMINEO

When you are dead, father, said he, I hope that I shall ride in the saddle. Oh, 'tis a brave thing for a man to sit by himself! He may stretch himself in the stirrups, look about, and see the whole compass of the hemisphere. You're now, my lord, in the saddle.

GIOVANNI

Study your prayers, sir, and be penitent.

He leaves. GASPARO quickly follows him.

FLAMINEO considers the mess he has just created, and how badly it is likely to turn out.

FLAMINEO

Study my prayers! He threatens me divinely!
I am falling to pieces already. I care not,
though I were pounded to death in a mortar,
to make a cullis for the devil.
He hath his uncle's villainous look.

(GASPARO returns)

Now, sir, what are you?

GASPARO surveys FLAMINEO coldly. His manner has changed.

GASPARO

It is the pleasure, sir, of the young duke,
That you forbear the presence, and all rooms
That owe him reverence.

FLAMINEO

So the wolf and the raven are very pretty fools
when they are young. Is it your office, sir,
to keep me out?

GASPARO

So the duke wills.

FLAMINEO

Verily, Master Courtier: say, that a gentlewoman
were taken out of her bed about midnight, and
committed to the tower yonder, with nothing
about her but her smock, would it not show a cruel
part in the gentleman-porter to lay claim to her
upper garment, pull it over her head and ears,
and put her in naked?

GASPARO

Very good: you are merry.

He directs FLAMINEO toward the door.

FLAMINEO

Doth he make a court-ejectment of me? A flaming
fire-brand casts more smoke without a chimney
than within it. I'll smoor some of them.

FRANCISCO, still disguised as MULINASSAR, appears, his
priestly ATTENDANTS carrying his suticases.

FLAMINEO

How now? Thou art sad.

FRANCISCO

I met even now with the most piteous sight.

FLAMINEO

Thou meetest another here, a pitiful
Degraded courtier.

But FRANCISCO, though in disguise, isn't joking.

FRANCISCO

Your reverend mother
Is grown a very old woman in two hours.
I found her winding of Marcello's corse;
And there is such a solemn melody,
'Tween doleful songs, tears, and sad elegies,
I had no eyes to guide me forth the room,
They were so overcharged with water.

FLAMINEO

I'll see 'em.

FRANCISCO

'Twere much uncharity in you; for your sight
Will add unto their tears.

FLAMINEO grins. He grabs the corner of the frame and
tears a WIPE across the screen - suddenly we are in the -

URSINI FAMILY VAULT INT DAY

- where CORNELIA, ZANCHE, and other LADIES wind MARCELLO's
corpse.

FLAMINEO

I will see 'em: I'll discover

Their superstitious howling.

CORNELIA

This rosemary is withered; pray, get fresh.
I would have these herbs grow upon his grave,
When I am dead and rotten. Reach the bays,
I'll tie a garland here about his head;
I have kept this twenty year, and every day
Hallowed it with my prayers; I did not think
He should have wore it.

ZANCHE

Look you, who are yonder?

CORNELIA

Oh, reach me the flowers!

ZANCHE

Her ladyship's foolish.

WOMAN

Alas, her grief
Hath turned her child again!

CORNELIA

You're very welcome:

(to FLAMINEO)

There's rosemary for you, and rue for you,
Heart's-ease for you; I pray make much of it,
I have left more for myself.

FRANCISCO

Lady, who's this?

CORNELIA

You are, I take it, the grave-maker.

FLAMINEO

So.

ZANCHE

'Tis Flamineo.

CORNELIA

Will you make me such a fool? here's a white hand:
Can blood so soon be washed out? let me see;
When screech-owls croak upon the chimney-tops,
And the strange cricket in the oven sings and hops,
When yellow spots do on your hands appear,
Be certain then you of a corpse shall hear.
Out upon it, how 'tis speckled! He's handled a toad sure.

FLAMINEO

I would I were from hence.

CORNELIA

Do you hear, sir?
 They would not bury him 'cause he died in a quarrel;
 But I have an answer for them:
 Let holy church receive him duly,
 Since he paid the church-tithes truly.
 His wealth is summed, and this is all his store,
 This poor men get, and great men get no more.

CORNELIA and the LADIES put away their things.

CORNELIA

Now the wares are gone, we may shut up shop.
 Bless you all, good people.

Exeunt. FLAMINEO sits beside his brother's body.

FLAMINEO

I have a strange thing in me, to the which
 I cannot give a name, without it be
 Compassion. I pray leave me.

Exeunt COURTIERS.

FLAMINEO

(to CAMERA)

This night I'll know the utmost of my fate;
 I'll be resolved what my rich sister means
 To assign me for my service. I have lived
 Riotously ill, like some that live in court,
 And sometimes when my face was full of smiles,
 Have felt the maze of conscience in my breast.
 Oft gay and honoured robes those tortures try:
 We think caged birds sing, when indeed they cry.

Through the tomb wall, crashes a FEARSOME FIGURE.

FLAMINEO pulls a knife -

Before him is BRACCIANO'S GHOST, in racer gear, boots, helmet.
 He carries a pot of lily flowers, with a SKULL in it.

FLAMINEO

Ha! I can stand thee: nearer, nearer yet.
 What a mockery hath death made thee! Thou lookest sad.
 In what place art thou? In yon starry gallery?
 Or in the cursed dungeon? No? Not speak?
 Pray, sir, resolve me, what religion's best
 For a man to die in? Or is it in your knowledge
 To answer me how long I have to live?
 That's the most necessary question.
 Not answer? Are you still to no purpose?

The GHOST throws earth upon him, and shows him the skull.

FLAMINEO

What's that? O fatal!

A dead man's skull beneath the roots of flowers!

ECU THE SKULL - amid roots, bugs crawling therein...

FLAMINEO

I pray speak, sir!

FLAMINEO looks up. The GHOST has gone. The walls have washed away. The background is a distant VOID, with stars in it.

FLAMINEO

He's gone; and see, the skull and earth are vanished.
 This is beyond melancholy. I do dare my fate
 To do its worst. Now to my sister's lodging,
 And sum up all those horrors: the disgrace
 The prince threw on me; next the piteous sight
 Of my dead brother; and my mother's dotage;
 And last this terrible vision: all these
 Shall with Vittoria's bounty turn to good,
 Or I will drown this weapon in her blood.

He puts away his knife.

ELIZABETHAN BANQUETING HALL INT NIGHT

- built in a basement beneath BRACCIANO's mansion.
 It doubles as a basketball court, with hoops, a high table,
 hogs' heads, suits of armour and baronial shields bearing
 BRACCIANO's escutcheon.

VITTORIA sits at the banqueting table, studying her late
 husband's accounts. ZANCHE does likewise on a second computer.

FLAMINEO bursts in, dragging a heavy backpack.

FLAMINEO

What, are you at your prayers? Give over.

VITTORIA

How, ruffian?

FLAMINEO

I come to you 'bout worldly business.
 Sit down, sit down. Nay, stay, blowze, you may hear it:
 The doors are fast enough.

VITTORIA

Ha! are you drunk?

FLAMINEO

Yes, yes, with wormwood water; you shall taste
Some of it presently.

VITTORIA

What intends the fury?

FLAMINEO

You are my lord's executrix; and I claim
Reward for my long service.

VITTORIA

For your service!

FLAMINEO

Come, therefore, set down
What you will give me.

VITTORIA

There.

She texts him.

FLAMINEO

Ha! have you done already?
'Tis a most short conveyance.

He looks for it on his phone.

VITTORIA

I will read it:
I give that portion to thee, and no other,
Which Cain groaned under, having slain his brother.

FLAMINEO

A most courtly patent to beg by.

VITTORIA

You are a villain!

FLAMINEO

Is it come to this?
Thou hast a devil in thee; I will try
If I can scare him from thee. Nay, sit still:
My lord hath left me yet two cases of jewels.
You shall see them.

He delves into his backpack -

VITTORIA

Sure he's distracted.

ZANCHE

Oh, he's desperate!

For your own safety give him gentle language.

- pulls out TWO of BRACCIANO'S DUELLING PISTOLS.

FLAMINEO

Look, these are better far at a dead lift,
Than all your jewel house.

VITTORIA

And yet, methinks,
These stones have no fair lustre, they are ill set.

FLAMINEO

I'll turn the right side towards you: you shall see
How they will sparkle.

VITTORIA

Turn this horror from me!
What do you want? What would you have me do?
Is not all mine yours? Have I any children?

FLAMINEO

Do not trouble me
With this vain worldly business; say your prayers:
Neither yourself nor I should outlive him
The numbering of four hours.

He stands before a large, heroic portrait of BRACCIANO and his CARS.

VITTORIA

Did he enjoin it?

FLAMINEO

He did, and 'twas a deadly jealousy,
Lest any should enjoy thee after him,
That urged him vow me to it. For my death,
I did propound it voluntarily, knowing,
If he could not be safe in his own court,
Being a great duke, what hope then for us?

VITTORIA

This is your melancholy, and despair.

FLAMINEO

Away!
Fool thou art, to think that politicians
Do use to kill the effects of injuries
And let the cause live.

VITTORIA

Will you hear me?

FLAMINEO

My life hath done service to other men,
My death shall serve mine own turn: make you ready.

VITTORIA

Do you mean to die indeed?

FLAMINEO

With as much pleasure,
As e'er my father gat me.

VITTORIA

Are the doors locked?

ZANCHE

Yes, madam.

VITTORIA

Are you grown an atheist?

(to ZANCHE)

Cry out for help!

(to FLAMINEO)

Will you turn your body,
Which is the goodly palace of the soul,
To the soul's slaughter-house?

ZANCHE

Help, help!

FLAMINEO aims a PISTOL at ZANCHE.

FLAMINEO

I'll stop your throat.

VITTORIA

I pray thee yet remember,
Millions are now in graves, which at last day
Like mandrakes shall rise shrieking.

FLAMINEO

Leave your prating,
For these are but grammatical laments,
Feminine arguments.

ZANCHE

(aside)

Gentle madam,
Seem to consent, only persuade him to teach
The way to death; let him die first.

VITTORIA

'Tis good, I apprehend it.
To kill one's self is meat that we must take
Like pills, not chewed, but quickly swallow it.

FLAMINEO

I have held it
A wretched and most miserable life,
Which is not able to die.

VITTORIA

Oh, but frailty!
Yet I am now resolved; farewell, affliction!
(to the portrait)
Behold, Bracciano, I that while you lived
Did make a flaming altar of my heart
To sacrifice unto you, now am ready
To sacrifice heart and all. Farewell, Zanche!

ZANCHE

How, madam! do you think that I'll outlive you;
Especially when my best self, Flamineo,
Goes the same voyage?

FLAMINEO

O most loved Moor!

ZANCHE

Only, by all my love, let me entreat you,
Since it is most necessary one of us
Do violence on ourselves, let you or I
Be her sad taster, teach her how to die.

FLAMINEO

Thou dost instruct me nobly. Take these pistols;
Because my hand is stained with blood already,
Two of these you shall level at my breast,
The others -
(he indicates his backpack)
- against your own, and so we'll die
Most equally contented; but first swear
Not to outlive me.

VITTORIA & ZANCHE

Most religiously.

FLAMINEO

Then here's an end of me; farewell, daylight,
I take my leave of thee.

He hands VITTORIA and ZANCHE pistols.

FLAMINEO

These are two cupping-glasses, that shall draw
All my infected blood out. Are you ready?

BOTH
Ready.

FLAMINEO
Whither shall I go now?
Whether I resolve to fire, earth, water, air,
Or all the elements, I know not,
Nor greatly care.
(tears open his shirt)
Shoot! shoot!
Of all deaths, the violent death is best;
For from ourselves it steals ourselves so fast,
The pain, once apprehended, is quite past.

They shoot, then run at him.

VITTORIA
What, are you dropped?

FLAMINEO
I am mixed with earth already: as you are noble,
Perform your vows, and bravely follow me.

VITTORIA
Whither? To hell?

ZANCHE
To most assured damnation?

They stamp on him.

ZANCHE
Thou art caught -

VITTORIA
In thine own engine. I tread the fire out
That would have been my ruin.

FLAMINEO
Will you be perjured? Your religious oaths -

VITTORIA
Think whither thou art going.

ZANCHE
Remember what villainies thou hast acted.

FLAMINEO writhes on the floor, clutching his guts. Smoke
rises from his chest. He seems to be dying painfully.

FLAMINEO

O, the way's dark and horrid! I cannot see:
Shall I have no company?

VITTORIA

O, yes, thy sins
Do run before thee to fetch fire from hell,
To light thee thither.

FLAMINEO

O, I smell soot,
Most stinking soot! the chimney's afire:
My liver's parboiled;
There's a plumber laying pipes in my guts, it scalds.
Wilt thou outlive me?

ZANCHE

Yes, and drive a stake
Through thy body; for we'll give it out,
Thou didst this violence upon thyself.

FLAMINEO

O, cunning devils! Now I have tried your love,
And doubled all your reaches; I am not wounded.

Like a Hollywood action villain in the last reel, FLAMINEO rises. His clothes smoke from the powder burns, but there is no blood. He has tricked them.

FLAMINEO

The pistols held no bullets; 'twas a plot
To prove your kindness to me; and I live
To punish your ingratitude.

VITTORIA

O thou most cursed devil!

FLAMINEO

Trust a woman?
Never, never; Bracciano be my precedent.
We lay our souls to pawn to the devil for
a little pleasure, and a woman makes the bill
of sale.

From the backpack he produces two more PISTOLS.
Loaded, this time.

FLAMINEO

Here are two other instruments.

ANGLE ON TWO HOODED PENITENTES

From the fueneral cortege, passing through the corridor.

VITTORIA
Help, help!

FLAMINEO
What noise is that? Hah! False keys in the court!

The PENITENTES pile on him.

PENITENTE
Do you know us now?

He throws back his hood. It is LODOVICO. FLAMINEO doesn't recognise him.

LODOVICO
Lodovico! And Gasparo.
And that Moor your duke gave pension to
Was the great Duke of Florence.

VITTORIA
Oh, we are lost!

FLAMINEO
You shall not take justice forth from my hands,
Oh, let me kill her!

He tries to shoot VITTORIA. GASPARO and LODOVICO seize his guns.

LODOVICO
Bind him to the pillar.

VITTORIA
Oh, your gentle pity!
I have seen a blackbird that would sooner fly
To a man's bosom, than to stay the gripe
Of the fierce sparrow-hawk.

GASPARO
Your hope deceives you.

VITTORIA
If Florence be in the court, would he kill me?

GASPARO
Fool! Princes give rewards with their own hands,
But death or punishment by the hands of others.

LODOVICO
Dost laugh?

FLAMINEO

Wouldst have me die, as I was born, in whining?

GASPARO

Recommend yourself to heaven.

FLAMINEO

No, I will carry mine own commendations thither.

LODOVICO

Oh, I could kill you forty times a day,
Four years together, 'twere too little!
What dost think on?

FLAMINEO

Nothing; of nothing. Leave thy idle questions.
I am in the way to study a long silence:
To prate were idle. I remember nothing.
There's nothing of so infinite vexation
As man's own thoughts.

LODOVICO

O thou glorious strumpet,
Could I divide thy breath from this pure air
When it leaves thy body, I would suck it up,
And breathe it upon some dunghill.

VITTORIA

You, my death's-man!
Methinks you have too good a face to be a hangman.
If thou be, do thy office in right form;
Fall down upon thy knees, and ask forgiveness.

LODOVICO

O, thou hast been a most prodigious comet!
But I'll cut off your train. Kill the Moor first.

VITTORIA

You shall not kill her first. Behold my breast -
I will be waited on in death; my servant
Shall never go before me.

GASPARO

Are you so brave?

VITTORIA

Yes, I shall welcome death,
As princes do some great ambassadors;
I'll meet thy weapon half way.

LODOVICO

Thou dost tremble;
Methinks, fear should dissolve thee into air.

VITTORIA

Oh, thou art deceived, I am too true a woman!
I will not in my death shed one base tear;
Or if look pale, for want of blood, not fear.

The ASSASINS produce their guns.

GASPARO

Thou art my task, black fury.

ZANCHE

I have blood
As red as either of theirs: wilt drink some?
'Tis good for the falling-sickness. I am proud:
Death cannot alter my complexion,
For I shall never look pale.

LODOVICO

Strike, strike,
With a joint motion.

They fire. GASPARO's shot kills ZANCHE outright. LODOVICO makes a mess of his. VITTORIA and FLAMINEO are only wounded.

VITTORIA

'Twas a manly blow;
The next thou givest, murder some sucking infant;
And then thou wilt be famous.

FLAMINEO

Search my wound deeper; tent it with the steel
That made it.

LODOVICO tries to fire again. His gun is jammed.

VITTORIA

Oh, my greatest sin lay in my blood!
Now my blood pays for't.

FLAMINEO

Thou art a noble sister!
I love thee now; if woman do breed man,
She ought to teach him manhood. Fare thee well.
Know, many glorious women that are famed
For masculine virtue, have been vicious, -

VITTORIA

My soul, like to a ship in a black storm,
Is driven, I know not whither.

FLAMINEO

Then cast anchor.
Prosperity doth bewitch men, seeming clear;

But seas do laugh, show white, when rocks are near.
 We cease to grieve, cease to be fortune's slaves,
 Nay, cease to die by dying. Art thou gone?

VITTORIA dies.

FLAMINEO tries to rise.

FLAMINEO

I recover like a spent taper, for a flash,
 And instantly go out. I have caught
 An everlasting cold; I have lost my voice
 Most irrecoverably. Farewell, glorious villains.
 This busy trade of life appears most vain,
 Since rest breeds rest, where all seek pain by pain.
 Oh, I am in a mist!

The ASSASSINS make for the door. As GASPARO goes first,
 LODOVICO throws his noose around his neck, and starts to
 strangle him.

FLAMINEO recovers, again.

FLAMINEO

Let no harsh flattering bells resound my knell;
 Strike, thunder, and strike loud, to my farewell!

There is no thunder. Disappointed, he dies. Loud banging.
 Then the doors crash open, revealing PRINCE GIOVANNI, GUARDS,
 AMBASSADORS, and PAPERAZZI.

LODOVICO

Ha! are we betrayed?

AMBASSADOR

Keep back the prince: shoot! shoot!

A hail of gunfire cuts down LODOVICO and the choking GASPARO.

GASPARO

O, I am wounded!

GIOVANNI

You bloody villains,
 By what authority have you committed
 This massacre?

LODOVICO

By thine.

GIOVANNI

Mine?

LODOVICO

Yes; thy uncle, which is a part of thee,
enjoined us to it.

GIOVANNI

He turned murderer?
Away with them to prison, and to torture:
All that have hands in this shall taste our justice.

LODOVICO

I do glory yet,
That I can call this act mine own. For my part,
The rack, the gallows, and the torturing wheel,
Shall be but -

A bag is thrown over his head before he can finish.

ANGLE ON LITTLE GIOVANNI

Standing next to FLAMINEO's corpse.

GIOVANNI

Remove these bodies. See, my honoured lords -

He forgets his lines. FRANCISCO DE MEDICIS, off-screen,
coaches the prince.

FRANCISCO O/S

What use you ought make of their punishment.

Hold on FLAMINEO's corpse. It is PHOTOGRAPHED.

GIOVANNI & FRANCISCO O/S

Let guilty men remember, their black deeds
Do lean on crutches made of slender reeds.

More FLASH PHOTOS are taken - of FLAMINEO, of his dead sister,
of his dead girlfriend.

FLASH!

FLASH!

FLA --