Venice Preserved: A Tragedy

by Thomas Otway

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FRONTISPIECE

VENICE PRESERVED.

A Tragedy,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY THOMAS OTWAY.

CORRECTLY GIVEN,

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL.

With Remarks.

VENICE_PRESERVED

London:

Printed by D. S. Maurice, Fenchurch-street; SOLD BY T. HUGHES, 35, LUDGATE STREET, AND J. BYSH, 52, PATERNOSTER ROW;

REMARKS.

This interesting tragedy owes its plot and plan to the Abbé de St. Réal's "Histoire de la Conjuration de Marquis de Bedamar," or account of the Spanish conspiracy at Venice, of which the Marquis de Bedamar, the ambassador from Spain, was a promoter. Nature and the passions are finely touched in this play; and it continues a favorite, deprived, as it now is in representation, of that mixture of vile comedy which originally diversified the tragic action. It has been remarked, that Belvidera is the only truly valuable character; and indeed the principal fault of this drama seems a want of sufficient and probable motive.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Drury Lane, 1814.Covent Garden, 1817. Duke of VeniceMr. Carr.Mr. Creswell.

PriuliMr. Powell.Mr. Egerton. BedamarMr. J. Wallack.Mr. Connor. JaffierMr. Rae.Mr. C. Kemble. PierreMr. Elliston.Mr. Young. RenaultMr. R. Phillips.Mr. Chapman. ElliottMr. Waldegrave.Mr. Hamerton. SpinosaMr. Elrington.Mr. Claremont. TheodoreMr. J. West.Mr. King. DurandMr. Wallack.Mr. Grant. MezzanaMr. Buxton.Mr. Norris. Officers {Messrs. Ray and Cooke.Messrs. Jeffrey and Tooley. BelvideraMiss Smith.Miss O'Neill. Officers, Guards, Senators, Executioner, &c.

VENICE PRESERVED.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I. A STREET IN VENICE.

Enter Priuli and Jaffier. Pri. No more! I'll hear no more! Be gone and leave me. Jaf. Not hear me! By my suffering, but you shall! My lord, my lord! I'm not that abject wretch You think me. Patience! where's the distance throws Me back so far, but I may boldly speak In right, though proud oppression will not hear me? Pri. Have you not wrong'd me? Jaf. Could my nature e'er Have brook'd injustice, or the doing wrongs, I need not now thus low have bent myself To gain a hearing from a cruel father. Wrong'd you? Pri. Yes, wrong'd me! In the nicest point, The honour of my house, you've done me wrong. You may remember (for I now will speak, And urge its baseness) when you first came home From travel, with such hopes as made you look'd on, By all men's eyes, a youth of expectation, Pleas'd with your growing virtue, I receiv'd you; Courted, and sought to raise you to your merits: My house, my table, nay, my fortune too, My very self, was yours; you might have us'd me To your best service; like an open friend I treated, trusted you, and thought you mine: When, in requital of my best endeavours, You treacherously practis'd to undo me. Jaf. Yes, all, and then adieu for ever. There's not a wretch, that lives on common charity, But's happier than me: for I have known The luscious sweets of plenty; every night Have

slept with soft content about my head, And never wak'd, but to a joyful morning; Yet now must fall, like a full ear of corn, Whose blossom 'scap'd, yet's wither'd in the ripening. Pri. Home, and be humble; study to retrench; Discharge the lazy vermin of thy hall, Those pageants of thy folly: Reduce the glitt'ring trappings of thy wife To humble weeds, fit for thy little state: Then, to some suburb cottage both retire; Drudge to feed loathsome life; get brats and starve— Home, home, I say.[exit. Jaf. Yes, if my heart would let me— This proud, this swelling heart: home I would go, But that my doors are baleful to my eyes, Fill'd and dam'd up with gaping creditors, Watchful as fowlers when their game will spring. I've now not fifty ducats in the world, Yet still I am in love, and pleas'd with ruin. Oh! Belvidera! Oh! she is my wife— And we will bear our wayward fate together, But ne'er know comfort more. Enter Pierre. Pier. My friend, good morrow; How fares the honest partner of my heart? What, melancholy! not a word to spare me? Jaf. I'm thinking, Pierre, how that damn'd starving quality, Call'd honesty, got footing in the world. Pier. Why, powerful villany first set it up, For its own ease and safety. Honest men Are the soft easy cushions on which knaves Repose and fatten. Were all mankind villains, They'd starve each other; lawyers would want practice, Cut-throats rewards: each man would kill his brother Himself; none would be paid or hang'd for murder. Honesty! 'twas a cheat invented first To bind the hands of bold deserving rogues, That fools and cowards might sit safe in power, And lord it uncontrol'd above their betters. Jaf. Then honesty is but a notion? Pier. Nothing else; Like wit, much talk'd of, not to be defin'd: He that pretends to most, too, has least share in't. 'Tis a ragged virtue: Honesty! no more on't. Jaf. Sure thou art honest! Pier. So, indeed, men think me; But they're mistaken, Jaffier: I'm a rogue As well as they; A fine, gay, bold-fac'd villain as thou seest me. 'Tis true, I pay my debts, when they're contracted; I steal from no man; would not cut a throat To gain admission to a great man's purse, Or a whore's bed; I'd not betray my friend To get his place or fortune; I scorn to flatter A blown-up fool above me, or crush the wretch beneath me; Yet, Jaffier, for all this I'm

a villain. Jaf. A villain! Pier. Yes, a most notorious villain; To see the sufferings of my fellow creatures, And own myself a man: to see our senators Cheat the deluded people with a show Of liberty, which yet they ne'er must taste of. They say, by them our hands are free from fetters; Yet whom they please they lay in basest bonds; Bring whom they please to infamy and sorrow; Drive us, like wrecks, down the rough tide of power, Whilst no hold's left to save us from destruction. All that bear this are villains, and I one, Not to rouse up at the great call of nature, And check the growth of these domestic spoilers, That make us slaves, and tell us, 'tis our charter. Jaf. I think no safety can be here for virtue, And grieve, my friend, as much as thou, to live In such a wretched state as this of Venice, Where all agree to spoil the public good; And villains fatten with the brave man's labours. Pier. We've neither safety, unity, nor peace, For the foundation's lost of common good; Justice is lame, as well as blind, amongst us; The laws (corrupted to their ends that make 'em) Serve but for instruments of some new tyranny, That every day starts up, t' enslave us deeper. Now could this glorious cause but find out friends To do it right, oh, Jaffier! then might'st thou Not wear these seals of woe upon thy face; The proud Priuli should be taught humanity, And learn to value such a son as thou art. I dare not speak, but my heart bleeds this moment. Jaf. Curs'd be the cause, though I thy friend be part on't: Let me partake the troubles of thy bosom, For I am us'd to misery, and perhaps May find a way to sweeten't to thy spirit. Pier. Too soon 'twill reach thy knowledge— Jaf. Then from thee Let it proceed. There's virtue in thy friendship, Would make the saddest tale of sorrow pleasing, Strengthen my constancy and welcome ruin. Pier. Then thou art ruined! Jaf. That I long since knew; I and ill fortune have been long acquainted. Pier. I pass'd this very moment by thy doors, And found them guarded by a troop of villains; The sons of public rapine were destroying. They told me, by the sentence of the law, They had commission to seize all thy fortune: Nay more, Priuli's cruel hand had sign'd it. Here stood a ruffian with a horrid face, Lording it o'er a pile of massy plate, Tumbled into a heap for public sale; There was another,

making villanous jests At thy undoing: he had ta'en possession Of all thy ancient, most domestic, ornaments, Rich hangings intermix'd and wrought with gold; The very bed, which on thy wedding-night Receiv'd thee to the arms of Belvidera, The scene of all thy joys, was violated By the coarse hands of filthy dungeon villains, And thrown amongst the common lumber. Jaf. Now, thank heaven— Pier. Thank heaven! for what? Jaf. That I'm not worth a ducat. Pier. Curse thy dull stars, and the worse fate of Venice, Where brothers, friends, and fathers, all are false; Where there's no truth, no trust; where innocence Stoops under vile oppression, and vice lords it. Hadst thou but seen, as I did, how at last Thy beauteous Belvidera, like a wretch That's doom'd to banishment, came weeping forth, Shining through tears, like April suns in showers, That labour to o'ercome the cloud that loads 'em; Whilst two young virgins, on whose arms she lean'd, Kindly look'd up, and at her grief grew sad, As if they catch'd the sorrows that fell from her. Ev'n the lewd rabble, that were gather'd round To see the sight, stood mute when they beheld her; Govern'd their roaring throats, and grumbled pity. I could have hugg'd the greasy rogues: they pleas'd me. Jaf. I thank thee for this story, from my soul; Since now I know the worst that can befal me. Ah, Pierre! I have a heart that could have borne The roughest wrong my fortune could have done me; But when I think what Belvidera feels, The bitterness her tender spirit tastes of, I own myself a coward: bear my weakness; If, throwing thus my arms about thy neck, I play the boy, and blubber in thy bosom. Oh! I shall drown thee with my sorrows. Pier. Burn, First burn and level Venice to thy ruin. What! starve, like beggars' brats, in frosty weather, Under a hedge, and whine ourselves to death! Thou or thy cause shall never want assistance, Whilst I have blood or fortune fit to serve thee: Command my heart, thou'rt every way its master. Jaf. No, there's a secret pride in bravely dying. Pier. Rats die in holes and corners, dogs run mad; Man knows a braver remedy for sorrow: Revenge, the attribute of gods; they stamp'd it, With their great image, on our natures. Die! Consider well the cause, that calls upon thee: And, if thou'rt base enough, die then.

Remember, Thy Belvidera suffers; Belvidera! Die—damn first—What! be decently interr'd In a church-yard, and mingle thy brave dust With stinking rogues, that rot in winding-sheets, Surfeit-slain fools, the common dung o'th' soil! Jaf. Oh! Pier. Well said, out with't, swear a little— Jaf. Swear! By sea and air; by earth, by heav'n, and hell, I will revenge my Belvidera's tears. Hark thee, my friend—Priuli—is—a senator. Pier. A dog. Jaf. Agreed. Pier. Shoot him. Jaf. With all my heart. No more; where shall we meet at night? Pier. I'll tell thee; On the Rialto, every night at twelve, I take my evening's walk of meditation; There we two will meet, and talk of precious Mischief— Jaf. Farewell. Pier. At twelve. Jaf. At any hour; my plagues Will keep me waking.[exit Pierre. Tell me why, good heaven, Thou mad'st me, what I am, with all the spirit, Aspiring thoughts, and elegant desires, That fill the happiest man? Ah, rather, why Didst thou not form me sordid as my fate, Base-minded, dull, and fit to carry burthens? Why have I sense to know the curse that's on me? Is this just dealing, nature?—Belvidera! Enter Belvidera. Poor Belvidera! Bel. Lead me, lead me, my virgins, To that kind voice. My lord, my love, my refuge! Happy my eyes, when they behold thy face! My heavy heart will leave its doleful beating At sight of thee, and bound with sprightly joys. Oh smile! as when our loves were in their spring, And cheer my fainting soul. Jaf. As when our loves Were in their spring! Has then our fortune chang'd? Art thou not Belvidera, still the same, Kind, good, and tender, as my arms first found thee? If thou art alter'd, where shall I have harbour? Where ease my loaded heart? Oh! where complain? Bel. Does this appear like change, or love decaying, When thus I throw myself into thy bosom, With all the resolution of strong truth! Beats not my heart, as 'twould alarum thine To a new charge of bliss?—I joy more in thee, Than did thy mother, when she hugg'd thee first, And bless'd the gods for all her travail past. Jaf. Can there in woman be such glorious faith? Sure all ill stories of thy sex are false! Oh woman! lovely woman! nature made thee To temper man: we had been brutes without you! Angels are painted fair, to look like you: There's in you all that we believe of heaven; Amazing

brightness, purity, and truth, Eternal joy, and everlasting love. Bel. If love be treasure, we'll be wondrous rich; I have so much, my heart will surely break with't: Vows can't express it. When I would declare How great's my joy, I'm dumb with the big thought; I swell, and sigh, and labour with my longing. O! lead me to some desert wide and wild, Barren as our misfortunes, where my soul May have its vent, where I may tell aloud To the high heavens, and ev'ry list'ning planet, With what a boundless stock my bosom's fraught; Where I may throw my eager arms about thee, Give loose to love, with kisses kindling joy, And let off all the fire that's in my heart. Jaf. Oh, Belvidera! doubly I'm a beggar: Undone by fortune, and in debt to thee. Want, worldly want, that hungry, meagre fiend, Is at my heels, and chases me in view. Canst thou bear cold and hunger? Can these limbs, Fram'd for the tender offices of love, Endure the bitter gripes of smarting poverty? When banish'd by our miseries abroad (As suddenly we shall be) to seek out In some far climate, where our names are strangers, For charitable succour; wilt thou then, When in a bed of straw we shrink together, And the bleak winds shall whistle round our heads; Wilt thou then talk thus to me? Wilt thou then Hush my cares thus, and shelter me with love? Bel. Oh! I will love thee, even in madness love thee; Though my distracted senses should forsake me, I'd find some intervals, when my poor heart Should 'swage itself, and be let loose to thine. Though the bare earth be all our resting-place, Its roots our food, some cleft our habitation, I'll make this arm a pillow for thine head; And, as thou sighing ly'st, and swell'd with sorrow, Creep to thy bosom, pour the balm of love Into thy soul, and kiss thee to thy rest; Then praise our God, and watch thee till the morning. Jaf. Hear this, ye heav'ns! and wonder how you made her: Reign, reign, ye monarchs that divide the world, Busy rebellion ne'er will let you know Tranquillity and happiness like mine! Like gaudy ships th' obsequious billows fall, And rise again to lift you in your pride; They wait but for a storm, and then devour you; I, in my private bark already wreck'd, Like a poor merchant driven to unknown land, That had by chance pack'd up his choicest treasure In one dear

casket, and sav'd only that; Since I must wander further on the shore, Thus hug my little, but my precious store, Resolv'd to scorn and trust my fate no more.[exeunt.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.THE RIALTO.

Enter Jaffier. Jaf. I'm here; and thus, the shades of night around me, I look as if all hell were in my heart, And I in hell. Nay surely 'tis so with me!— For every step I tread, methinks some fiend Knocks at my breast, and bids me not be quiet. I've heard how desperate wretches, like myself, Have wander'd out at this dead time of night, To meet the foe of mankind in his walk. Sure I'm so curs'd that, though of heaven forsaken, No minister of darkness cares to tempt me. Hell, hell! why sleep'st thou? Enter Pierre. Pier. Sure I've staid too long: The clock has struck, and I may lose my proselyte. Speak, who goes there? Jaf. A dog, that comes to howl At yonder moon. What's he that asks the question? Pier. A friend to dogs, for they are honest creatures, And ne'er betray their masters: never fawn On any that they love not. Well met, friend: Jaffier! Jaf. The same. Pier. Where's Belvidera?— Jaf. For a day or two I've lodg'd her privately, till I see further What fortune will do for me. Pr'ythee, friend, If thou wouldst have me fit to hear good counsel, Speak not of Belvidera— Pier. Not of her! Jaf. Oh, no! Pier. Not name her! May be I wish her well. Jaf. Whom well? Pier. Thy wife; thy lovely Belvidera. I hope a man may wish his friend's wife well, And no harm done? Jaf. Y' are merry, Pierre. Pier. I am so: Thou shalt smile too, and Belvidera smile: We'll all rejoice. Here's something to buy pins; Marriage is chargeable.[gives him a purse. Jaf. I but half wish'd To see the devil, and he's here already. Well! What must this buy? Rebellion, murder, treason? Tell me, which way I must be damn'd for this. Pier. When last we parted, we'd no qualms like these, But entertain'd each other's thoughts like men Whose souls were well acquainted. Is the world Reform'd since our last meeting? What new miracles Have happen'd? Has Priuli's heart relented? Can he be honest? Jaf. Kind heav'n, let heavy

curses Gall his old age; cramps, aches, rack his bones, And bitterest disquiet wring his heart. Oh! let him live, till life become his burden: Let him groan under't long, linger an age In the worst agonies and pangs of death, And find its ease but late. Pier. Nay, couldst thou not As well, my friend, have stretch'd the curse to all The senate round, as to one single villain? Jaf. But curses stick not: could I kill with cursing, By heaven I know not thirty heads in Venice Should not be blasted. Senators should rot Like dogs on dunghills. Oh! for a curse To kill with! Pier. Daggers! daggers are much better. Jaf. Ha! Pier. Daggers. Jaf. But where are they? Pier. Oh! a thousand May be dispos'd of, in honest hands, in Venice. Jaf. Thou talk'st in clouds. Pier. But yet a heart, half wrong'd As thine has been, would find the meaning, Jaffier. Jaf. A thousand daggers, all in honest hands! And have not I a friend will stick one here! Pier. Yes, if I thought thou wert not cherish'd T' a nobler purpose, I would be thy friend; But thou hast better friends; friends whom thy wrongs Have made thy friends; friends worthy to be call'd so. I'll trust thee with a secret. There are spirits This hour at work.—But as thou art a man, Whom I have pick'd and chosen from the world, Swear that thou wilt be true to what I utter; And when I've told thee that which only gods, And men like gods, are privy to, then swear No chance or change shall wrest it from thy bosom. Jaf. When thou wouldst bind me, is there need of oaths? For thou'rt so near my heart, that thou may'st see Its bottom, sound its strength and firmness to thee. Is coward, fool, or villain, in my face? If I seem none of these, I dare believe Thou wouldst not use me in a little cause, For I am fit for honour's toughest task, Nor ever yet found fooling was my province; And for a villainous, inglorious, enterprise, I know thy heart so well, I dare lay mine Before thee, set it to what point thou wilt. Pier. Nay, 'tis a cause thou wilt be fond of, Jaffier; For it is founded on the noblest basis; Our liberties, our natural inheritance. There's no religion, no hypocrisy in't; We'll do the business, and ne'er fast and pray for't; Openly act a deed the world shall gaze With wonder at, and envy when 'tis done. Jaf. For liberty! Pier. For liberty, my friend. Thou shalt be freed

from base Priuli's tyranny, And thy sequester'd fortunes heal'd again: I shall be free from those opprobrious wrongs That press me now, and bend my spirit downward; All Venice free, and every growing merit Succeed to its just right: fools shall be pull'd From wisdom's seat; those baleful, unclean birds, Those lazy owls, who, perch'd near fortune's top, Sit only watchful with their heavy wings To cuff down new-fledg'd virtues, that would rise To nobler heights, and make the grove harmonious. Jaf. What can I do? Pier. Canst thou not kill a senator? Jaf. Were there one wise or honest, I could kill him. For herding with that nest of fools and knaves. By all my wrongs, thou talk'st as if revenge Were to be had; and the brave story warms me. Pier. Swear then! Jaf. I do, by all those glittering stars, And yon great ruling planet of the night; By all good pow'rs above, and ill below; By love and friendship, dearer than my life, No pow'r or death shall make me false to thee. Pier. Here we embrace, and I'll unlock my heart. A council's held hard by, where the destruction Of this great empire's hatching: there I'll lead thee. But be a man! for thou'rt to mix with men Fit to disturb the peace of all the world, And rule it when it's wildest— Jaf. I give thee thanks For this kind warning. Yes, I'll be a man; And charge thee, Pierre, whene'er thou seest my fears Betray me less, to rip this heart of mine Out of my breast, and show it for a coward's. Come, let's be gone, for from this hour I chase All little thoughts, all tender human follies Out of my bosom. Vengeance shall have room: Revenge! Pier. And liberty! Jaf. Revenge—revenge—[exeunt. SCENE II. AQUILINA'S HOUSE. Enter Renault. Ren. Why was my choice ambition? the worst ground A wretch can build on! It's, indeed, at distance, A goodly prospect, tempting to the view; The height delights us, and the mountain top Looks beautiful, because it's nigh to heav'n. But we ne'er think how sandy's the foundation, What storm will batter, and what tempest shake us. Who's there? Enter Spinosa. Spin. Renault, good morrow, for by this time I think the scale of night has turn'd the balance, And weighs up morning! Has the clock struck twelve? Ren. Yes! clocks will go as they are set; but man, Irregular man's ne'er

constant, never certain: I've spent at least three precious hours of darkness In waiting dull attendance: 'tis the curse Of diligent virtue to be mix'd, like mine, With giddy tempers, souls but half resolv'd. Spin. Hell seize that soul amongst us it can frighten. Ren. What's then the cause that I am here alone? Why are we not together? Enter Elliott. O, sir, welcome! You are an Englishman: when treason's hatching, One might have thought you'd not have been behindhand. In what whore's lap have you been lolling? Give but an Englishman his whore and ease, Beef, and a sea-coal fire, he's yours for ever. Ell. Frenchman, you are saucy. Ren. How! Enter Bedamar, the Ambassador; Theodore, Bramveil, Durand, Brabe, Revillido, Mezzana, Ternon, and Retrosi, Conspirators. Bed. At difference; fie! Is this a time for quarrels? Thieves and rogues Fall out and brawl: should men of your high calling, Men separated by the choice of Providence From the gross heap of mankind, and set here In this assembly as in one great jewel, T' adorn the bravest purpose it e'er smil'd on; Should you, like boys, wrangle for trifles? Ren. Boys! Bed. Renault, thy hand. Ren. I thought I'd given my heart Long since to every man that mingles here; But grieve to find it trusted with such tempers, That can't forgive my froward age its weakness. Bed. Elliott, thou once hadst virtue. I have seen Thy stubborn temper bend with godlike goodness, Not half thus courted. 'Tis thy nation's glory To hug the foe that offers brave alliance. Once more embrace, my friends—we'll all embrace. United thus, we are the mighty engine Must twist this rooted empire from its basis. Totters not it already? Ell. Would 'twere tumbling. Bed. Nay, it shall down; this night we seal its ruin. Enter Pierre. Oh, Pierre, thou art welcome. Come to my breast, for by its hopes thou look'st Lovelily dreadful, and the fate of Venice Seems on thy sword already. Oh, my Mars! The poets that first feign'd a god of war, Sure prophesied of thee. Pier. Friend, was not Brutus (I mean that Brutus, who in open senate Stabb'd the first Cæsar that usurp'd the world), A gallant man? Ren. Yes, and Catiline too; Though story wrong his fame: for he conspir'd To prop the reeling glory of his country: His cause was good. Bed. And ours as much above it, As, Renault, thou'rt

superior to Cethegus, Or Pierre to Cassius. Pier. Then to what we aim at. When do we start? or must we talk for ever? Bed. No, Pierre, the deed's near birth; fate seems to have set The business up, and given it to our care; I hope there's not a heart or hand amongst us, But is firm and ready. All. All. We'll die with Bedamar. Bed. O men Matchless! as will your glory be hereafter: The game is for a matchless prize, if won; If lost, disgraceful ruin. Pier. Ten thousand men are armed at your nod, Commanded all by leaders fit to guide A battle for the freedom of the world: This wretched state has starv'd them in its service; And, by your bounty quicken'd, they're resolved To serve your glory, and revenge their own: They've all their different quarters in this city, Watch for th' alarm, and grumble 'tis so tardy. Bed. I doubt not, friend, but thy unwearied diligence Has still kept waking, and it shall have ease; After this night it is resolv'd we meet No more, till Venice owns us for her lords. Pier. How lovelily the Adriatic whore, Dress'd in her flames, will shine! Devouring flames Such as shall burn her to the watery bottom, And hiss in her foundation. Bed. Now if any Amongst us, that owns this glorious cause, Have friends or interest he'd wish to save, Let it be told: the general doom is seal'd; But I'd forego the hopes of a world's empire, Rather than wound the bowels of my friend. Pier. I must confess, you there have touch'd my weakness. I have a friend; hear it! such a friend, My heart was ne'er shut to him. Nay, I'll tell you: He knows the very business of this hour; But he rejoices in the cause, and loves it; We've chang'd a vow to live and die together, And he's at hand to ratify it here. Ren. How! all betray'd! Pier. No—I've nobly dealt with you; I've brought my all into the public stock: I've but one friend, and him I'll share among you: Receive and cherish him; or if, when seen And search'd, you find him worthless,—as my tongue Has lodg'd this secret in his faithful breast,— To ease your fears, I wear a dagger here Shall rip it out again, and give you rest. Come forth, thou only good I e'er could boast of. Enter Jaffier, with a dagger. Bed. His presence bears the show of manly virtue. Jaf. I know you'll wonder all, that, thus uncall'd, I dare approach this place of fatal councils; But I'm amongst you, and by heav'n it

glads me To see so many virtues thus united To restore justice, and dethrone oppression. Command this sword, if you would have it quiet, Into this breast; but, if you think it worthy To cut the throats of reverend rogues in robes, Send me into the curs'd assembled senate: It shrinks not, though I meet a father there. Would you behold this city flaming? here's A hand shall bear a lighted torch at noon To th' arsenal, and set its gates on fire. Ren. You talk this well, sir. Jaf. Nay—by heaven I'll do this. Come, come, I read distrust in all your faces; You fear me villain, and, indeed, it's odd To hear a stranger talk thus, at first meeting, Of matters that have been so well debated; But I come ripe with wrongs, as you with councils. I hate this senate, am a foe to Venice; A friend to none, but men resolv'd like me To push on mischief. Oh! did you but know me, I need not talk thus! Bed. Pierre, I must embrace him. My heart beats to this man, as if it knew him. Ren. I never lov'd these huggers. Jaf. Still I see The cause delights ye not. Your friends survey me As I were dangerous—But I come arm'd Against all doubts, and to your trust will give A pledge, worth more than all the world can pay for. My Belvidera. Hoa; my Belvidera! Bed. What wonder's next? Jaf. Let me entreat you, As I have henceforth hopes to call you friends, That all but the ambassador, and this Grave guide of councils, with my friend that owns me, Withdraw awhile, to spare a woman's blushes. [exeunt all but Bedamar, Renault, Jaffier, and Pierre. Enter Belvidera. Bed. Pierre, whither will this ceremony lead us? Jaf. My Belvidera! Belvidera! Bel. Who, Who calls so loud at this late peaceful hour? That voice was wont to come in gentle whispers, And fill my ears with the soft breath of love. Thou hourly image of my thoughts, where art thou? Jaf. Indeed 'tis late. Bel. Alas! where am I? whither is't you lead me? Methinks I read distraction in your face, Something less gentle than the fate you tell me. You shake and tremble too! your blood runs cold! Heav'ns guard my love, and bless his heart with patience. Jaf. That I have patience, let our fate bear witness, Who has ordain'd it so, that thou and I (Thou, the divinest good man e'er possess'd, And I, the wretched'st of the race of man) This very hour,

without one tear, must part. Bel. Part! must we part? Oh, am I then forsaken? Why drag you from me? Whither are you going? My dear! my life! my love! Jaf. Oh, friends! Bel. Speak to me. Jaf. Take her from my heart, She'll gain such hold else, I shall ne'er get loose. I charge thee take her, but with tender'st care Relieve her troubles, and assuage her sorrows. Ren. Rise, madam, and command amongst your servants. Jaf. To you, sirs, and your honours, I bequeath her; [gives a dagger. And with her this; when I prove unworthy— You know the rest——then strike it to her heart; And tell her, he who three whole happy years Lay in her arms, and each kind night repeated The passionate vows of still increasing love, Sent that reward for all her truth and sufferings. Bel. Nay, take my life, since he has sold it cheaply. O! thou unkind one; Never meet more! have I deserv'd this from you; Look on me, tell me, speak, thou fair deceiver. Why am I separated from thy love? If I am false, accuse me; but if true, Don't, pr'ythee don't, in poverty forsake me, But pity the sad heart that's torn with parting. Yet hear me, yet recall me—[ex. Ren. Bed. and Bel. Jaf. Oh! my eyes, Look not that way, but turn yourselves awhile Into my heart, and be wean'd altogether. My friend, where art thou? Pier. Here, my honour's brother. Jaf. Is Belvidera gone? Pier. Renault has led her Back to her own apartment; but, by heav'n, Thou must not see her more, till our work's over. Jaf. No! Pier. Not for your life. Jaf. Oh, Pierre, wert thou but she, How I would pull thee down into my heart, Gaze on thee, till my eye-strings crack'd with love; Then, swelling, sighing, raging to be blest, Come like a panting turtle to thy breast; On thy soft bosom hovering, bill and play, Confess the cause why last I fled away; Own 'twas a fault, but swear to give it o'er, And never follow false ambition more.[exeunt.

ACT THE THIRD.

Enter Belvidera. Bel. I'm sacrific'd! I'm sold! betray'd to shame! Inevitable ruin has enclos'd me! He that should guard my virtue has betray'd it; Left me! undone me! Oh, that I could hate him! Where shall I go? Oh, whither, whither, wander? Enter

Jaffier. Jaf. Can Belvidera want a resting-place, When these poor arms are ready to receive her? There was a time—— Bel. Yes, yes, there was a time, When Belvidera's tears, her cries, and sorrows, Were not despis'd; when, if she chanc'd to sigh, Or look'd but sad—there was indeed a time, When Jaffier would have ta'en her in his arms, Eas'd her declining head upon his breast, And never left her till he found the cause. Jaf. Oh, Portia, Portia! what a soul was thine! Bel. That Portia was a woman; and when Brutus, Big with the fate of Rome, (heav'n guard thy safety!) Conceal'd from her the labours of his mind; She let him see her blood was great as his, Flow'd from a spring as noble, and a heart Fit to partake his troubles as his love. Fetch, fetch that dagger back, the dreadful dower, Thou gav'st last night in parting with me; strike it Here to my heart; and, as the blood flows from it, Judge if it run not pure, as Cato's daughter's. Jaf. Oh! Belvidera! Bel. Why was I last night deliver'd to a villain? Jaf. Ha! a villain? Bel. Yes, to a villain! why at such an hour Meets that assembly, all made up of wretches? Why, I in this hand, and in that a dagger, Was I deliver'd with such dreadful ceremonies? To you, sirs, and to your honours, I bequeath her, And with her this: whene'er I prove unworthy— You know the rest—then strike it to her heart. Oh! why's that rest conceal'd from me? must I Be made the hostage of a hellish trust? For such I know I am; that's all my value. But, by the love and loyalty I owe thee, I'll free thee from the bondage of the slaves; Straight to the senate, tell 'em all I know, All that I think, all that my fears inform me. Jaf. Is this the Roman virtue; this the blood That boasts its purity with Cato's daughter? Would she have e'er betrayed her Brutus? Bel. No: For Brutus trusted her. Wert thou so kind, What would not Belvidera suffer for thee? Jaf. I shall undo myself, and tell thee all. Yet think a little, ere thou tempt me further; Think I've a tale to tell will shake thy nature, Melt all this boasted constancy thou talk'st of, Into vile tears and despicable sorrows: Then if thou shouldst betray me!— Bel. Shall I swear! Jaf. No, do not swear: I would not violate Thy tender nature, with so rude a bond: But as thou hop'st to see me live my days, And love thee long, lock this within

thy breast: I've bound myself, by all the strictest sacraments, Divine and human—— Bel. Speak! Jaf. To kill thy father—— Bel. My father! Jaf. Nay, the throats of the whole senate Shall bleed, my Belvidera. He amongst us, That spares his father, brother, or his friend, Is damn'd. Bel. Oh! Jaf. Have a care, and shrink not even in thought. For if thou dost—— Bel. I know it; thou wilt kill me. Do, strike thy sword into this bosom: lay me Dead on the earth, and then thou wilt be safe. Murder my father! though his cruel nature Has persecuted me to my undoing; Driven me to basest wants; can I behold him, With smiles of vengeance, butcher'd in his age? The sacred fountain of my life destroy'd? And canst thou shed the blood that gave me being? Nay, be a traitor too, and sell thy country? Can thy great heart descend so vilely low, Mix with hir'd slaves, bravoes, and common stabbers, Nose-slitters, alley-lurking villains! join With such a crew, and take a ruffian's wages, To cut the throats of wretches as they sleep? Jaf. Thou wrong'st me, Belvidera! I've engaged With men of souls; fit to reform the ills Of all mankind: there's not a heart among them But's stout as death, yet honest as the nature Of man first made, ere fraud and vice were fashion. Bel. What's he, to whose curs'd hands last night thou gav'st me? Was that well done? Oh! I could tell a story, Would rouse thy lion heart out of its den, And make it rage with terrifying fury. Jaf. Speak on, I charge thee. Bel. O my love! If e'er Thy Belvidera's peace deserv'd thy care, Remove me from this place. Last night, last night! Jaf. Distract me not, but give me all the truth. Bel. No sooner wert thou gone, and I alone, Left in the pow'r of that old son of mischief; No sooner was I lain on my sad bed, But that vile wretch approach'd me, loose, unbutton'd, Ready for violation. Then my heart Throbb'd with its fears: Oh, how I wept and sigh'd, And shrunk and trembled! wish'd in vain for him That should protect me! Thou, alas! wert gone. Jaf. Patience, sweet heav'n, 'till I make vengeance sure. Bel. He drew the hideous dagger forth, thou gav'st him, And with upbraiding smiles, he said, Behold it: This is the pledge of a false husband's love: And in my arms then press'd, and would have clasp'd me; But with my cries I scar'd his coward heart, 'Till

he withdrew, and mutter'd vows to hell. These are thy friends! with these thy life, thy honour, Thy love, all stak'd, and all will go to ruin. Jaf. No more: I charge thee keep this secret close. Clear up thy sorrows; look as if thy wrongs Were all forgot, and treat him like a friend, As no complaint were made. No more; retire, Retire, my life, and doubt not of my honour; I'll heal its failings, and deserve thy love. Bel. Oh! should I part with thee, I fear thou wilt In anger leave me, and return no more. Jaf. Return no more! I would not live without thee Another night, to purchase the creation. Bel. When shall we meet again? Jaf. Anon, at twelve I'll steal myself to thy expecting arms: Come like a travell'd dove, and bring thee peace. Bel. Indeed! Jaf. By all our loves. Bel. 'Tis hard to part: But sure no falsehood ever look'd so fairly. Farewell; remember twelve.[exit. Jaf. Let heav'n forget me, When I remember not thy truth, thy love. Enter Pierre. Pier. Jaffier! Jaf. Who calls? Pier. A friend, that could have wish'd T' have found thee otherwise employ'd. What, hunt A wife, on the dull soil! Sure a staunch husband Of all hounds is the dullest. Wilt thou never, Never, be wean'd from caudles and confections? What feminine tales hast thou been list'ning to, Of unair'd shirts, catarrhs, and tooth-ache, got By thin-sol'd shoes? Damnation! that a fellow, Chosen to be a sharer in the destruction Of a whole people, should sneak thus into corners To ease his fulsome lusts, and fool his mind. Jaf. May not a man then trifle out an hour With a kind woman, and not wrong his calling? Pier. Not in a cause like ours. Jaf. Then, friend, our cause Is in a damn'd condition: for I'll tell thee, That cankerworm, call'd lechery, has touch'd it; 'Tis tainted vilely. Wouldst thou think it? Renault (That mortify'd, old, wither'd, winter rogue,) He visited her last night, like a kind guardian: Faith! she has some temptation, that's the truth on't. Pier. He durst not wrong his trust. Jaf. 'Twas something late, though, To take the freedom of a lady's chamber. Pier. Was she in bed? Jaf. Yes, faith, in virgin sheets, White as her bosom, Pierre, dish'd neatly up, Might tempt a weaker appetite to taste. Oh! how the old fox stunk, I warrant thee, When the rank fit was on him! Pier. Patience guide me! He us'd no violence? Jaf.

No, no; out on't, violence! Play'd with her neck; brush'd her with his grey beard; But not a jot of violence. Pier. Damn him. Jaf. Ay, so say I: but hush, no more on't. All hitherto is well, and I believe Myself no monster yet. Sure it is near the hour We all should meet for our concluding orders: Will the ambassador be here in person? Pier. No, he has sent commission to that villain, Renault, To give the executing charge: I'd have thee be a man, if possible, And keep thy temper; for a brave revenge Ne'er comes too late. Jaf. Fear not, I am cool as patience. Pier. He's yonder, coming this way through the hall; His thoughts seem full. Jaf. Pr'ythee retire, and leave me With him alone: I'll put him on some trial; See how his rotten part will bear the touching. Pier. Be careful, then.[exit. Jaf. Nay, never doubt, but trust me. What! be a devil, take a damning oath For shedding native blood! Can there be a sin In merciful repentance? Oh, this villain! Enter Renault. Ren. Perverse and peevish! What a slave is man To let his rebel passions master him! Despatch the tool her husband—that were well. Who's there? Jaf. A man. Ren. My friend, my near ally, The hostage of your faith, my beauteous charge, is very well. Jaf. Sir, are you sure of that? Stands she in perfect health? Beats her pulse even; Neither too hot nor cold? Ren. What means that question? Jaf. Oh! women have fantastic constitutions, Inconstant in their wishes, always wavering, And never fix'd. Was it not boldly done, Even at first sight, to trust the thing I lov'd (A tempting treasure too) with youth so fierce And vigorous as thine? but thou art honest. Ren. Who dares accuse me? Jaf. Curs'd be he that doubts Thy virtue! I have try'd it, and declare, Were I to choose a guardian of my honour, I'd put it in thy keeping: for I know thee. Ren. Know me! Jaf. Ay, know thee. There's no falsehood in thee. Thou look'st just as thou art. Let us embrace. Now would'st thou cut my throat, or I cut thine. Ren. You dare not do't. Jaf. You lie, sir. Ren. How! Jaf. No more, 'Tis a base world, and must reform, that's all. Enter Spinosa, Theodore, Elliott, Revillido, Durand, Bramveil, and the rest of the Conspirators. Ren. Spinosa! Theodore! Spin. The same. Ren. You are welcome. Spin. You are trembling, sir. Ren. 'Tis a cold night, indeed, and I am aged; Full of

decay and natural infirmities: Re-enter Pierre. We shall be warm, my friends, I hope, to-morrow. Pier. 'Twas not well done; thou shouldst have strok'd him, And not have gall'd him. Jaf. Damn him, let him chew on't. Heav'n! where am I? beset with cursed fiends, That wait to damn me! What a devil's man, When he forgets his nature——hush, my heart. Ren. My friends, 'tis late; are we assembled all? To-morrow's rising sun must see you all Deck'd in your honours. Are the soldiers ready? Pier. All, all. Ren. You, Durand, with your thousand, must possess St. Mark's; you, captain, know your charge already, 'Tis to secure the ducal palace. Be all this done with the least tumult possible, 'Till in each place you post sufficient guards; Then sheathe your swords in every breast you meet. Jaf. Oh! reverend cruelty! damn'd bloody villain! Ren. During this execution, Durand, you Must in the midst keep your battalia fast; And, Theodore, be sure to plant the cannon That they may command the streets; This done, we'll give the general alarm, Apply petards, and force the ars'nal gates; Then fire the city round in several places, Or with our cannon (if it dare resist) Batter to ruin. But above all I charge you, Shed blood enough; spare neither sex nor age, Name nor condition; if there live a senator After to-morrow, though the dullest rogue That e'er said nothing, we have lost our ends. If possible, let's kill the very name Of senator, and bury it in blood. Jaf. Merciless, horrid slave! Ay, blood enough! Shed blood enough, old Renault! how thou charm'st me! Ren. But one thing more, and then farewell, till fate Join us again, or sep'rate us for ever. First let's embrace. Heav'n knows who next shall thus Wing ye together; but let's all remember, We wear no common cause upon our swords: Let each man think that on his single virtue Depends the good and fame of all the rest; Eternal honour, or perpetual infamy. You droop, sir. Jaf. No; with most profound attention I've heard it all, and wonder at thy virtue. Oh, Belvidera! take me to thy arms, And show me where's my peace, for I have lost it.[exit. Ren. Without the least remorse then, let's resolve With fire and sword t' exterminate these tyrants, Under whose weight this wretched country labours; The means are only in our hands to crown

them. Pier. And may those pow'rs above that are propitious To gallant minds, record this cause and bless it. Ren. Thus happy, thus secure of all we wish. Should there, my friends, be found among us one False to this glorious enterprise, what fate, What vengeance, were enough for such a villain? Ell. Death here without repentance, hell hereafter. Ren. Let that be my lot, if as here I stand, Listed by fate among her darling sons, Though I had one only brother, dear by all The strictest ties of nature; could I have such a friend Join'd in this cause, and had but ground to fear He meant foul play; may this right hand drop from me, If I'd not hazard all my future peace, And stab him to the heart before you: who, Who would do less? Wouldst thou not, Pierre, the same? Pier. You've singled me, sir, out for this hard question, As if it were started only for my sake! Am I the thing you fear? Here, here's my bosom, Search it with all your swords. Am I a traitor? Ren. No: but I fear your late commended friend Is little less. Come, sirs, 'tis now no time To trifle with our safety. Where's this Jaffier? Spin. He left the room just now, in strange disorder. Ren. Nay, there is danger in him. I observ'd him; During the time I took for explanation, He was transported from most deep attention To a confusion which he could not smother; His looks grew full of sadness and surprise, All which betray'd a wavering spirit in him, That labour'd with reluctancy and sorrow. What's requisite for safety, must be done With speedy execution; he remains Yet in our power: I, for my own part, wear A dagger—— Pier. Well. Ren. And I could wish it—— Pier. Where? Ren. Buried in his heart. Pier. Away; we're yet all friends, No more of this, 'twill breed ill blood among us. Spin. Let us all draw our swords, and search the house, Pull him from the dark hole where he sits brooding O'er his cold fears, and each man kill his share of him. Pier. Who talks of killing? Who's he'll shed the blood That's dear to me? is't you, or you, or you, sir? What, not one speak! how you stand gaping all On your grave oracle, your wooden god there! Yet not a word! Then, sir, I'll tell you a secret; Suspicion's but at best a coward's virtue.[to Ren. Ren. A coward![handles his sword. Pier. Put up thy sword, old man; Thy hand shakes at it. Come, let's heal this breach;

I am too hot, we yet may all live friends. Spin. Till we are safe, our friendship cannot be so. Pier. Again! Who's that? Spin. 'Twas I. Theo. And I. Ren. And I. Omnes. And all. Ren. Who are on my side? Spin. Every honest sword. Let's die like men, and not be sold like slaves. Pier. One such word more, by heaven I'll to the senate, And hang ye all, like dogs, in clusters. Why weep your coward swords half out their shells? Why do you not all brandish them like mine? You fear to die, and yet dare talk of killing. Ren. Go to the senate, and betray us! haste! Secure thy wretched life; we fear to die Less than thou dar'st be honest. Pier. That's rank falsehood. Fear'st not thou death! Fie, there's a knavish itch In that salt blood, an utter foe to smarting. Had Jaffier's wife prov'd kind, he'd still been true. Faugh, how that stinks! thou die, thou kill my friend! Or thou! or thou! with that lean wither'd face. Away, disperse all to your several charges, And meet to-morrow where your honour calls you. I'll bring that man, whose blood you so much thirst for, And you shall see him venture for you fairly— Hence! hence, I say.[exit Renault, angrily. Spin. I fear we've been to blame, And done too much. Theo. 'Twas too far urg'd against the man you lov'd. Rev. Here, take our swords, and crush them with your feet. Spin. Forgive us, gallant friend. Pier. Nay, now you've found The way to melt, and cast me as you will. Whence rose all this discord? Oh, what a dangerous precipice have we 'scap'd! How near a fall was all we'd long been building! What an eternal blot had stain'd our glories, If one, the bravest and the best of men, Had fall'n a sacrifice to rash suspicion, Butcher'd by those, whose cause he came to cherish! Come but to-morrow, all your doubts shall end,} And to your loves, me better recommend, That I've preserv'd your fame, and sav'd my friend. [exeunt.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.THE RIALTO.

Enter Jaffier and Belvidera. Jaf. Where dost thou lead me? Every step I move, Methinks I tread upon some mangled limb Of a rack'd friend. O, my charming ruin!

Where are we wandering? Bel. To eternal honour. To do a deed shall chronicle thy name Among the glorious legends of those few That have sav'd sinking nations. Thy renown Shall be the future song of all the virgins, Who by thy piety have been preserv'd From horrid violation. Every street Shall be adorn'd with statues to thy honour; And at thy feet this great inscription written, Remember him that propp'd the fall of Venice. Jaf. Rather, remember him, who, after all The sacred bonds of oaths, and holier friendship, In fond compassion to a woman's tears, Forgot his manhood, virtue, truth, and honour, To sacrifice the bosom that reliev'd him. Why wilt thou damn me? Bel. Oh, inconstant man! How will you promise; how will you deceive! Do, return back, replace me in my bondage, Tell all my friends how dangerously thou lov'st me, And let thy dagger do its bloody office. Or, if thou think'st it nobler, let me live, Till I'm a victim to the hateful lust Of that infernal devil. Last night, my love! Jaf. Name it not again; It shows a beastly image to my fancy, Will wake me into madness. Destruction, swift destruction, fall on my coward head. Bel. Delay no longer then, but to the senate, And tell the dismal'st story ever utter'd: Tell 'em what bloodshed, rapines, desolations, Have been prepar'd: how near's the fatal hour. Save thy poor country, save the reverend blood Of all its nobles, which to-morrow's dawn Must else see shed. Jaf. Oh! think what then may prove my lot; By all heav'n's powers, prophetic truth dwells in thee; For every word thou speak'st, strikes through my heart. Just what thou'st made me, take me, Belvidera, And lead me to the place where I'm to say This bitter lesson; where I must betray My truth, my virtue, constancy, and friends. Must I betray my friend? Ah! take me quickly; Secure me well before that thought's renew'd; If I relapse once more, all's lost for ever. Bel. Hast thou a friend more dear than Belvidera? Jaf. No; thou'rt my soul itself; wealth, friendship, honour, All present joys, and earnest of all future, Are summ'd in thee. Come, lead me forward, now, like a tame lamb To sacrifice. Thus, in his fatal garlands Deck'd fine and pleas'd, the wanton skips and plays, Trots by th' enticing, flatt'ring, priestess' side, And, much transported with its

little pride, Forgets his dear companions of the plain; Till, by her bound, he's on the altar lain, Yet then too hardly bleats, such pleasure's in the pain. Enter Officer and six Guards. Offi. Stand! who goes there? Bel. Friends. Offi. But what friends are you? Bel. Friends to the senate, and the state of Venice. Offi. My orders are to seize on all I find At this late hour, and bring 'em to the council, Who are now sitting. Jaf. Sir, you shall be obey'd. Now the lot's cast, and, fate, do what thou wilt. [exeunt, guarded. SCENE II. THE SENATE-HOUSE. Duke of Venice, Priuli, and other Senators. Duke. Antony, Priuli, senators of Venice, Speak, why are we assembled here to night? What have you to inform us of, concerns The state of Venice' honour, or its safety? Pri. Could words express the story I've to tell you, Fathers, these tears were useless, these sad tears That fall from my old eyes; but there is cause We all should weep, tear off these purple robes, And wrap ourselves in sackcloth, sitting down On the sad earth, and cry aloud to heav'n. Heav'n knows, if yet there be an hour to come Ere Venice be no more. All Sen. How! Pri. Nay, we stand Upon the very brink of gaping ruin. Within this city's form'd a dark conspiracy, To massacre us all, our wives and children, Kindred and friends, our palaces and temples To lay in ashes; nay, the hour too fix'd; The swords, for aught I know, drawn e'en this moment, And the wild waste begun. From unknown hands I had this warning; but, if we are men, Let's not be tamely butcher'd, but do something That may inform the world, in after ages, Our virtue was not ruin'd, though we were.[noise. Room, room, make room for some prisoners— Enter Officer and Guards. Duke. Speak, there. What disturbance? Offi. Two prisoners have the guards seiz'd in the street, Who say they come t' inform this reverend senate About the present danger. Enter Jaffier and Officer. All Sen. Give 'em entrance.—Well, who are you? Jaf. A villain! Would every man, that hears me, Would deal so honestly, and own his title. Duke. 'Tis rumour'd, that a plot has been contriv'd Against this state; and you've a share in't too. If you are a villain, to redeem your honour Unfold the truth, and be restor'd with mercy. Jaf. Think not, that I to save my life came hither; I know its value better; but

in pity To all those wretches whose unhappy dooms Are fix'd and seal'd. You see me here before you, The sworn and covenanted foe of Venice: But use me as my dealings may deserve, And I may prove a friend. Duke. The slave capitulates; Give him the tortures. Jaf. That you dare not do; Your fear won't let you, not the longing itch To hear the story which you dread the truth of: Truth, which the fear of smart shall ne'er get from me. Cowards are scar'd with threat'nings; boys are whipt Into confessions; but a steady mind Acts of itself, ne'er asks the body counsel. Give him the tortures! Name but such a thing Again, by heav'n I'll shut these lips for ever. Not all your racks, your engines, or your wheels, Shall force a groan away, that you may guess at. Duke. Name your conditions. Jaf. For myself full pardon, Besides the lives of two-and-twenty friends, Whose names are here enroll'd. Nay, let their crimes Be ne'er so monstrous, I must have the oaths And sacred promise of this reverend council, That, in a full assembly of the senate, The thing I ask be ratify'd. Swear this, And I'll unfold the secret of your danger. Duke. Propose the oath. Jaf. By all the hopes Ye have of peace and happiness hereafter, Swear.—Ye swear? All Sen. We swear. Jaf. And, as ye keep the oath, May you and your posterity be bless'd, Or curs'd for ever. All Sen. Else be curs'd for ever. Jaf. Then here's the list, and with't the full disclose Of all that threatens you.[delivers a paper. Now, fate, thou hast caught me. Duke. Give order that all diligent search be made To seize these men, their characters are public; The paper intimates their rendezvous To be at the house of a fam'd Grecian courtezan, Call'd Aquilina; see that place secur'd. You, Jaffier, must with patience bear till morning To be our prisoner. Jaf. Would the chains of death Had bound me safe, ere I had known this minute. Duke. Captain, withdraw your prisoner. Jaf. Sir, if possible, Lead me where my own thoughts themselves may lose me; Where I may doze out what I've left of life, Forget myself, and this day's guilt and falsehood. Cruel remembrance, how shall I appease thee?[exit. Offi. [without] More traitors; room, room, room, make room, there. Duke. How's this? guards! Where are our guards? Shut up the gates, the treason's Already at our doors.

Enter Officer. Offi. My lords, more traitors, Seiz'd in the very act of consultation; Furnish'd with arms and instruments of mischief, Bring in the prisoners. Enter Pierre, Renault, Theodore, Elliott, Revillido, and other Conspirators, in fetters. Pier. You, my lords, and fathers (As you are pleas'd to call yourselves) of Venice; If you sit here to guide the course of justice, Why these disgraceful chains upon the limbs That have so often labour'd in your service? Are these the wreaths of triumph ye bestow On those, that bring you conquest home, and honours? Duke. Go on; you shall be heard, sir. Ant. And be hang'd too, I hope. Pier. Are these the trophies I've deserv'd for fighting Your battles with confederated powers? When winds and seas conspir'd to overthrow you, And brought the fleets of Spain to your own harbours; When you, great duke, shrunk trembling in your palace, And saw your wife, the Adriatic, plough'd, Like a lewd whore, by bolder prows than yours, Stepp'd not I forth, and taught your loose Venetians The task of honour, and the way to greatness? Rais'd you from your capitulating fears To stipulate the terms of sued-for peace? And this my recompense! if I'm a traitor, Produce my charge; or show the wretch that's base And brave enough to tell me I'm a traitor. Duke. Know you one Jaffier?[Conspirators murmur. Pier. Yes, and know his virtue. His justice, truth, his general worth, and sufferings From a hard father, taught me first to love him. Enter Jaffier, guarded. Duke. See him brought forth. Pier. My friend too bound! nay then Our fate has conquer'd us, and we must fall. Why droops the man whose welfare's so much mine, They're but one thing? These reverend tyrants, Jaffier, Call us traitors. Art thou one, my brother? Jaf. To thee, I am the falsest, veriest slave, That e'er betray'd a generous, trusting friend, And gave up honour to be sure of ruin. All our fair hopes, which morning was t' have crown'd, Has this curs'd tongue o'erthrown. Pier. So, then all's over: Venice has lost her freedom, I my life. No more! Farewell! Duke. Say; will you make confession Of your vile deeds, and trust the senate's mercy? Pier. Curs'd be your senate: curs'd your constitution: The curse of growing factions and divisions Still vex your councils, shake your public safety, And make

the robes of government you wear Hateful to you, as these base chains to me. Duke. Pardon, or death? Pier. Death! honourable death! Ren. Death's the best thing we ask, or you can give; No shameful bonds, but honourable death. Duke. Break up the council. Captain, guard your prisoners. Jaffier, you're free, but these must wait for judgment. [exeunt all the Senators. Pier. Come, where's my dungeon? Lead me to my straw: It will not be the first time I've lodg'd hard To do the senate service. Jaf. Hold, one moment. Pier. Who's he disputes the judgment of the senate? Presumptuous rebel—on—[strikes Jaffier. Jaf. By heav'n, you stir not! I must be heard; I must have leave to speak. Thou hast disgrac'd me, Pierre, by a vile blow: Had not a dagger done thee nobler justice? But use me as thou wilt, thou canst not wrong me, For I am fallen beneath the basest injuries: Yet look upon me with an eye of mercy, With pity and with charity behold me: But, as there dwells a godlike nature in thee, Listen with mildness to my supplications. Pier. What whining monk art thou? what holy cheat, That wouldst encroach upon my credulous ears, And cant'st thus vilely? Hence! I know thee not: Leave, hypocrite. Jaf. Not know me, Pierre? Pier. No, I know thee not! What art thou? Jaf. Jaffier, thy friend, thy once lov'd, valu'd friend! Though now deserv'dly scorn'd, and us'd most hardly. Pier. Thou, Jaffier! thou, my once lov'd, valu'd friend! By heav'ns thou liest; the man so call'd, my friend, Was generous, honest, faithful, just, and valiant; Noble in mind, and in his person lovely; Dear to my eyes, and tender to my heart: But thou, a wretched, base, false, worthless coward, Poor, even in soul, and loathsome in thy aspect; All eyes must shun thee, and all hearts detest thee. Pr'ythee avoid; nor longer cling thus round me, Like something baneful, that my nature's chill'd at. Jaf. I have not wrong'd thee, by these tears I have not. Pier. Hast thou not wrong'd me? Dar'st thou call thyself That once lov'd, valu'd friend of mine, And swear thou hast not wrong'd me? Whence these chains? Whence the vile death which I may meet this moment? Whence this dishonour, but from thee, thou false one? Jaf. All's true; yet grant one thing, and I've done asking. Pier. What's that? Jaf. To take thy life, on such

conditions The counsel have propos'd: thou, and thy friends, May yet live long, and to be better treated. Pier. Life! ask my life! confess! record myself A villain, for the privilege to breathe! And carry up and down this cursed city, A discontented and repining spirit, Burthensome to itself, a few years longer; To lose it, may be at last, in a lewd quarrel For some new friend, treacherous and false as thou art! No, this vile world and I have long been jangling, And cannot part on better terms than now, When only men, like thee, are fit to live in't. Jaf. By all that's just— Pier. Swear by some other power, For thou hast broke that sacred oath too lately. Jaf. Then, by that hell I merit, I'll not leave thee, Till, to thyself, at least thou'rt reconcil'd, However thy resentment deal with me. Pier. Not leave me! Jaf. No; thou shalt not force me from thee. Use me reproachfully, and like a slave; Tread on me, buffet me, heap wrongs on wrongs On my poor head; I'll bear it all with patience Shall weary out thy most unfriendly cruelty: Lie at thy feet, and kiss 'em, though they spurn me; Till, wounded by my sufferings, thou relent, And raise me to thy arms, with dear forgiveness. Pier. Art thou not— Jaf. What? Pier. A traitor? Jaf. Yes. Pier. A villain? Jaf. Granted. Pier. A coward, a most scandalous coward; Spiritless, void of honour; one who has sold Thy everlasting fame, for shameless life? Jaf. All, all, and more, much more: my faults are numberless. Pier. And wouldst thou have me live on terms like thine; Base, as thou art false— Jaf. No; 'tis to me that's granted: The safety of thy life was all I aim'd at, In recompense for faith and trust so broken. Pier. I scorn it more, because preserv'd by thee; And as, when first my foolish heart took pity On thy misfortunes, sought thee in thy miseries, Reliev'd thy wants, and rais'd thee from the state Of wretchedness, in which thy fate had plung'd thee, To rank thee in my list of noble friends, All I receiv'd, in surety for thy truth, Were unregarded oaths, and this, this dagger, Giv'n with a worthless pledge, thou since hast stol'n,— So I restore it back to thee again; Swearing, by all those pow'rs which thou hast violated, Never, from this curs'd hour, to hold communion, Friendship, or interest, with thee, though our years Were to exceed those limited the world. Take it—farewell—for now I owe

thee nothing. Jaf. Say thou wilt live then. Pier. For my life, dispose it Just as thou wilt, because 'tis what I'm tir'd with. Jaf. Oh, Pierre! Pier. No more. Jaf. My eyes won't lose the sight of thee, But languish after thee, and ache with gazing. Pier. Leave me—Nay, then thus, thus I throw thee from me; And curses, great as is thy falsehood, catch thee.[exit. Jaf. Amen. He's gone, my father, friend, preserver, And here's the portion he has left me:[shows the dagger. This dagger. Well remember'd! with this dagger, I gave a solemn vow of dire importance; Parted with this, and Belvidera together. Have a care, mem'ry, drive that thought no further: No, I'll esteem it as a friend's last legacy; Treasure it up within this wretched bosom, Where it may grow acquainted with my heart, That, when they meet, they start not from each other. So now for thinking—A blow, call'd a traitor, villain, Coward, dishonourable coward; fough! Oh! for a long sound sleep, and so forget it. Down, busy devil! Enter Belvidera. Bel. Whither shall I fly? Where hide me and my miseries together? Where's now the Roman constancy I boasted? Sunk into trembling fears and desperation, Not daring to look up to that dear face Which us'd to smile, ev'n on my faults; but, down, Bending these miserable eyes on earth, Must move in penance, and implore much mercy. Jaf. Mercy! kind heav'n has surely endless stores, Hoarded for thee, of blessings yet untasted: Oh, Belvidera! I'm the wretched'st creature E'er crawl'd on earth. My friend too, Belvidera, that dear friend, Who, next to thee, was all my health rejoic'd in, Has us'd me like a slave, shamefully us'd me: 'Twould break thy pitying heart to hear the story. Bel. What has he done? Jaf. Before we parted, Ere yet his guards had led him to his prison, Full of severest sorrows for his sufferings, With eyes o'erflowing, and a bleeding heart, As at his feet I kneel'd and su'd for mercy, With a reproachful hand he dash'd a blow: He struck me, Belvidera! by heav'n, he struck me! Buffetted, call'd me traitor, villain, coward. Am I a coward? Am I a villain? Tell me: Thou'rt the best judge, and mad'st me, if I am so! Damnation! Coward! Bel. Oh! forgive him, Jaffier; And, if his sufferings wound thy heart already, What will they do to-morrow? Jaf. Ah! Bel. To-morrow,

When thou shalt see him stretch'd in all the agonies Of a tormenting and a shameful death; His bleeding bowels, and his broken limbs, Insulted o'er, by a vile, butchering villain; What will thy heart do then? Oh! sure 'twill stream, Like my eyes now. Jaf. What means thy dreadful story? Death, and to-morrow! Broken limbs and bowels! Bel. The faithless senators, 'tis they've decreed it: They say, according to our friends' request, They shall have death, and not ignoble bondage: Declare their promis'd mercy all has forfeited: False to their oaths, and deaf to intercession, Warrants are pass'd for public death to-morrow. Jaf. Death! doom'd to die! condemn'd unheard! unpleaded! Bel. Nay, cruel'st racks and torments are preparing To force confession from their dying pangs. Oh! do not look so terribly upon me! How your lips shake, and all your face disorder'd! What means my love? Jaf. Leave me, I charge thee, leave me.—Strong temptations Wake in my heart. Bel. For what? Jaf. No more, but leave me. Bel. Why? Jaf. Oh! by heav'n, I love thee with that fondness, I would not have thee stay a moment longer Near these curs'd hands. Are they not cold upon thee? [pulls the dagger half out of his bosom, and puts it back again. Bel. No, everlasting comfort's in thy arms. To lean thus on thy breast, is softer ease Than downy pillows, deck'd with leaves of roses. Jaf. Alas! thou think'st not of the thorns 'tis fill'd with: Fly, ere they gall thee. There's a lurking serpent, Ready to leap and sting thee to the heart: Art thou not terrified? Bel. No. Jaf. Call to mind What thou hast done, and whither thou hast brought me. Bel. Hah! Jaf. Where's my friend? my friend, thou smiling mischief! Nay, shrink not, now 'tis too late; thou shouldst have fled When thy guilt first had cause; for dire revenge Is up, and raging for my friend. He groans! Hark, how he groans! his screams are in my ears Already; see, they've fix'd him on the wheel, And now they tear him.—Murder! Perjur'd senate! Murder.—Oh!—Hark thee, traitress, thou hast done this! Thanks to thy tears, and false persuading love. How her eyes speak! Oh, thou bewitching creature! [fumbling for his dagger. Madness can't hurt thee. Come, thou little trembler, Creep even into my heart, and there lie safe: 'Tis thy own citadel.—Hah—yet stand off. Heav'n must

have justice, and my broken vows Will sink me else beneath its reaching mercy. I'll wink, and then 'tis done— Bel. What means the lord Of me, my life, and love? What's in thy bosom, Thou grasp'st at so? Nay, why am I thus treated? [draws the dagger and offers to stab her. Jaf. Know, Belvidera, when we parted last, I gave this dagger with thee, as in trust, To be thy portion if I e'er prov'd false. On such condition, was my truth believ'd: But now 'tis forfeited, and must be paid for. [offers to stab her again. Bel. Oh! Mercy![kneeling. Jaf. Nay, no struggling. Bel. Now then, kill me.[leaps on his neck, kisses him. Jaf. I am, I am a coward; witness, heav'n, Witness it, earth, and every being, witness: 'Tis but one blow! yet, by immortal love, I cannot longer bear a thought to harm thee. [he throws away the dagger and embraces her. The seal of Providence is sure upon thee: And thou wert born for yet unheard-of wonders. Oh! thou wert either born to save or damn me. By all the power that's given me o'er thy soul, By thy resistless tears and conquering smiles, By the victorious love that still waits on thee. Fly to thy cruel father, save my friend, Or all our future quiet's lost for ever. Fall at his feet, cling round his reverend knees, Speak to him with thy eyes, and with thy tears, Melt his hard heart, and wake dead nature in him, Crush him in th' arms, torture him with thy softness; Nor, till thy prayers are granted, set him free, But conquer him, as thou hast conquer'd me.[exeunt.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.AN APARTMENT IN PRIULI'S HOUSE.

Enter Priuli. Pri. Why, cruel heav'n, have my unhappy days Been lengthen'd to this sad one? Oh! dishonour And deathless infamy is fallen upon me. Was it my fault? Am I a traitor? No. But then, my only child, my daughter wedded; There my best blood runs foul, and a disease Incurable has seiz'd upon my memory. Enter Belvidera, in a long mourning veil. Bel. He's there, my father, my inhuman father, That for three years has left an only child Expos'd to all the outrages of fate, And cruel rain!—oh!—— Pri. What child of sorrow Art thou, that comes wrapt in weeds

of sadness, And mov'st as if thy steps were tow'rds a grave? Bel. A wretch who from the very top of happiness Am fall'n into the lowest depths of misery, And want your pitying hand to raise me up again. Pri. What wouldst thou beg for? Bel. Pity and forgiveness.[throws up her veil. By the kind, tender names of child and father, Hear my complaints, and take me to your love. Pri. My daughter! Bel. Yes, your daughter. Pri. Don't talk thus. Bel. Yes, I must; and you must hear too. I have a husband. Pri. Damn him. Bel. Oh! do not curse him; He would not speak so hard a word towards you On any terms, howe'er he deals with me. Pri. Ha! what means my child? Bel. Oh! my husband, my dear husband, Carries a dagger in his once kind bosom, To pierce the heart of your poor Belvidera. Pri. Kill thee! Bel. Yes, kill me. When he pass'd his faith And covenant against your state and senate, He gave me up a hostage for his truth: With me a dagger and a dire commission, Whene'er he fail'd, to plunge it through this bosom. I learnt the danger, chose the hour of love T' attempt his heart, and bring it back to honour. Great love prevail'd, and bless'd me with success! He came, confess'd, betray'd his dearest friends For promis'd mercy. Now they're doom'd to suffer. Gall'd with remembrance of what then was sworn, If they are lost, he vows t' appease the gods With this poor life, and make my blood th' atonement. Pri. Heav'ns! Bel. If I was ever then your care, now hear me; Fly to the senate, save the promis'd lives Of his dear friends, ere mine be made the sacrifice. Pri. Oh, my heart's comfort! Bel. Will you not, my father? Weep not, but answer me. Pri. By heav'n I will. Not one of them but what shall be immortal. Canst thou forgive me all my follies past? I'll henceforth be indeed a father; never, Never more thus expose, but cherish thee, Dear as the vital warmth that feeds my life, Dear as these eyes that weep in fondness o'er thee. Peace to thy heart. Farewell. Bel. Go, and remember 'Tis Belvidera's life her father pleads for.[exeunt. SCENE II. A GARDEN. Enter Jaffier. Jaf. Final destruction seize on all the world. Bend down, ye heav'ns, and shutting round this earth, Crush the vile globe into its first confusion! Enter Belvidera. Bel. My life——[meeting him. Jaf. My plague——[turning from her. Bel. Nay, then I

see my ruin. If I must die! Jaf. Nor let the thoughts of death perplex thy fancy; But answer me to what I shall demand, With a firm temper and unshaken spirit. Bel. I will, when I've done weeping— Jaf. Fie, no more on't— How long is't since that miserable day We wedded first. Bel. Oh!—oh!— Jaf. Nay, keep in thy tears, Lest they unman me too. Bel. Heav'n knows I cannot; The words you utter sound so very sadly, The streams will follow— Jaf. Come, I'll kiss 'em dry then. Bel. But was't a miserable day? Jaf. A curs'd one. Bel. I thought it otherwise; and you've often sworn, In the transporting hours of warmest love, When sure you spoke the truth, you've sworn you bless'd it. Jaf. 'Twas a rash oath. Bel. Then why am I not curs'd too? Jaf. No, Belvidera; by th' eternal truth, I dote with too much fondness. Bel. Still so kind? Still then do you love me? Jaf. Man ne'er was blest Since the first pair met, as I have been. Bel. Then sure you will not curse me? Jaf. No, I'll bless thee. I came on purpose, Belvidera, to bless thee. Tis now, I think, three years, we've liv'd together. Bel. And may no fatal minute ever part us, Till, reverend grown for age and love, we go Down to one grave, as our last bed, together; There sleep in peace, till an eternal morning. Jaf. Did I not say, I came to bless thee? Bel. You did. Jaf. Then hear me, bounteous heav'n: Pour down your blessings on this beauteous head, Where everlasting sweets are always springing With a continual giving hand: let peace, Honour, and safety, always hover round her; Feed her with plenty; let her eyes ne'er see A sight of sorrow, nor her heart know mourning: Crown all her days with joy, her nights with rest, Harmless as her own thoughts; and prop her virtue, To bear the loss of one that too much lov'd; And comfort her with patience in our parting. Bel. How! Parting, parting! Jaf. Yes, for ever parting; I have sworn, Belvidera, by yon heav'n, That best can tell how much I lose to leave thee, We part this hour for ever. Bel. O! call back Your cruel blessing; stay with me and curse me. Jaf. Now hold, heart, or never. Bel. By all the tender days we've liv'd together, Pity my sad condition; speak, but speak. Jaf. Oh!—oh!— Bel. By these arms, that now cling round thy neck, By these poor streaming eyes— Jaf. Murder! unhold me: By

th' immortal destiny that doom'd me[draws dagger. To this curs'd minute, I'll not live one longer; Resolve to let me go, or see me fall—— Hark, the dismal bell[passing-bell tolls. Tolls out for death! I must attend its call too; For my poor friend, my dying Pierre, expects me: He sent a message to require I'd see him Before he died, and take his last forgiveness. Farewell, for ever. Bel. Leave thy dagger with me, Bequeath me something—Not one kiss at parting? Oh! my poor heart, when wilt thou break? [going out, looks back at him. Jaf. Yet stay: We have a child, as yet a tender infant. Be a kind mother to him when I'm gone; Breed him in virtue, and the paths of honour, But never let him know his father's story; I charge thee, guard him from the wrongs my fate May do his future fortune, or his name. Now—nearer yet—[approaching each other. Oh! that my arms were rivetted Thus round thee ever! But my friend! my oath! This and no more.[kisses her. Bel. Another, sure another, For that poor little one you've ta'en such care of. I'll giv't him truly. Jaf. So now, farewell. Bel. For ever? Jaf. Heav'n knows, for ever; all good angels guard thee.[exit. Bel. All ill ones sure had charge of me this moment. Curs'd be my days, and doubly curs'd my nights. Oh! give me daggers, fire, or water: How I could bleed, how burn, how drown, the waves Huzzing and booming round my sinking head, Till I descended to the peaceful bottom! Oh! there's all quiet, here all rage and fury: The air's too thin, and pierces my weak brain; I long for thick substantial sleep; hell! hell! Burst from the centre, rage and roar aloud, If thou art half so hot, so mad, as I am.[exit. SCENE III. A SCAFFOLD, AND A WHEEL PREPARED FOR THE EXECUTION OF PIERRE. Enter Officer, Pierre, Guards, Executioner, &c. Pier. My friend not come yet? Enter Jaffier. Jaf. Oh, Pierre! Pier. Yet nearer. Dear to my arms, though thou'st undone my fame, I can't forget to love thee. Pr'ythee, Jaffier, Forgive that filthy blow my passion dealt thee; I'm now preparing for the land of peace, And fain would have the charitable wishes Of all good men, like thee, to bless my journey. Jaf. Good! I am the vilest creature, worse than e'er Suffer'd the shameful fate thou'rt going to taste of. Offi. The time grows short, your friends are

dead already. Jaf. Dead! Pier. Yes, dead, Jaffier; they've all died like men too, Worthy their character. Jaf. And what must I do? Pier. Oh, Jaffier! Jaf. Speak aloud thy burthen'd soul, And tell thy troubles to thy tortur'd friend. Pier. Friend! Couldst thou yet be a friend, a generous friend, I might hope comfort from thy noble sorrows. Heav'n knows I want a friend. Jaf. And I a kind one, That would not thus scorn my repenting virtue, Or think, when he's to die, my thoughts are idle. Pier. No! live, I charge thee, Jaffier. Jaf. Yes, I will live: But it shall be to see thy fall reveng'd At such a rate, as Venice long shall groan for. Pier. Wilt thou? Jaf. I will, by heav'n. Pier. Then still thou'rt noble, And I forgive thee. Oh!—yet—shall I trust thee? Jaf. No; I've been false already. Pier. Dost thou love me? Jaf. Rip up my heart, and satisfy my doubtings. Pier. Curse on this weakness![weeps. Jaf. Tears! Amazement! Tears! I never saw thee melted thus before; And know there's something labouring in thy bosom, That must have vent: though I'm a villain, tell me. Pier. See'st thou that engine?[points to wheel. Jaf. Why? Pier. Is't fit a soldier, who has liv'd with honour, Fought nation's quarrels, and been crown'd with conquest, Be expos'd a common carcass on a wheel? Jaf. Ha! Pier. Speak! is't fitting? Jaf. Fitting! Pier. Yes; is't fitting? Jaf. What's to be done? Pier. I'd have thee undertake Something that's noble, to preserve my memory From the disgrace that's ready to attaint it. Offi. The day grows late, sir. Pier. I'll make haste. Oh, Jaffier! Though thou'st betrayed me, do me some way justice. Jaf. No more of that: thy wishes shall be satisfied; I have a wife, and she shall bleed: my child, too, Yield up his little throat, and all T' appease thee——[going away, Pierre holds him. Pier. No—this—no more.[whispers Jaffier. Jaf. Ha! is't then so? Pier. Most certainly. Jaf. I'll do it. Pier. Remember! Offi. Sir. Pier. Come, now I'm ready.[he & Jaf. ascend scaff. Captain, you should be a gentleman of honour; Keep off the rabble, that I may have room To entertain my fate, and die with decency. Come.[takes off his gown, Executioner prepares. You'll think on't.[to Jaffier. Jaf. 'Twon't grow stale before to-morrow. Pier. Now, Jaffier! now I'm going. Now— [Executioner having bound him. Jaf. Have at thee, Thou

honest heart, then—here—[stabs him. And this is well.[stabs himself. Pier. Now thou hast indeed been faithful. This was done nobly—We've deceiv'd the senate. Jaf. Bravely. Pier. Ha, ha, ha——oh! oh![dies. Jaf. Now, ye curs'd rulers, Thus of the blood y' have shed, I make libation And sprinkle it, mingling. May it rest upon you, And all your race. Be henceforth peace a stranger Within your walls; let plagues and famine waste Your generation—Oh, poor Belvidera! Sir, I have a wife, bear this in safety to her; A token that with my dying breath I bless'd her, And the dear little infant left behind me. I'm sick—I'm quiet.[dies; scene shuts upon them. SCENE IV. AN APARTMENT AT PRIULI'S. Soft music; enter Belvidera, distracted, led by two of her women; Priuli and Servants. Pri. Strengthen her heart with patience, pitying heav'n. Bel. Come, come, come, come, come, nay come to bed. Pr'ythee, my love. The winds! hark how they whistle; And the rain beats: Oh! how the weather shrinks me! You are angry now, who cares? pish, no indeed, Choose then; I say you shall not go, you shall not; Whip your ill nature; get you gone then. Oh! Are you return'd? see, father, here he's come again: Am I to blame to love him? O, thou dear one, Why do you fly me? are you angry still then? Jaffier, where art thou? father, why do you do thus? Stand off, don't hide him from me. He's here somewhere. Stand off, I say: what, gone? remember't, tyrant: I may revenge myself for this trick, one day. I'll do't—I'll do't. Enter Officer. Pri. News, what news?[Officer whispers Priuli. Offi. Most sad, sir; Jaffier, upon the scaffold, to prevent A shameful death, stabb'd Pierre, and next himself; Both fell together. Pri. Daughter! Bel. Ha! look there! My husband bloody, and his friend too! murder! Who has done this? speak to me, thou sad vision: On these poor trembling knees I beg it. Vanish'd— Here they went down—Oh, I'll dig, dig, the den up! You shan't delude me thus. Hoa, Jaffier, Jaffier, Peep up, and give me but a look. I have him! I've got him, father: Oh! My love! my dear! my blessing! help me! help me! They have hold on me, and drag me to the bottom. Nay—now they pull so hard—farewell— [dies; the curtain falls slowly to music. THE END.

Maurice, Fenchurch Street.

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One instance of the name Bromveil was changed to read Bramveil. Missing punctuation, especially at the end of speeches, has been added without comment.

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