

The Duchess of Malfi by John Webster

M/F SmS, SS, R&D, Kn

V, ii.

JOHN WEBSTER

815

Bos. Anything;
Give it me in a breath, and let me fly
to 't. 130
They that think long, small expedition
win,
For musing much o' th' end, cannot
begin.

[Enter Julia.]

JUL. Sir, will you come in to supper?

CARD. I am busy; leave me.

JUL. [Aside.] What an excellent shape
hath that fellow! Exit.

CARD. 'Tis thus. Antonio lurks here in
Milan;

Inquire him out, and kill him. While he
lives,

Our sister cannot marry; and I have
thought

Of an excellent match for her. Do this,
and style me

Thy advancement. 140

Bos. But by what means shall I find him
out?

CARD. There is a gentleman called Delio
Here in the camp, that hath been long
approved

His loyal friend. Set eye upon that
fellow;

Follow him to mass; may be Antonio,

Although he do account religion
But a school-name, for fashion of the
world

May accompany him; or else go inquire
out

Delio's confessor, and see if you can bribe
Him to reveal it. There are a thousand
ways 150

A man might find to trace him—as to
know

What fellows haunt the Jews for taking up
Great sums of money, for sure he's in
want;

Or else to go to th' picture makers, and
learn

Who bought ¹ her picture lately. Some
of these

Happily may take.

Bos. Well, I'll not freeze i' th' business;
I would see that wretched thing, An-
tonio,

Above all sights i' th' world.

CARD. Do, and be happy. Exit.

¹ Dyce's emendation for *brought*.

Bos. This fellow doth breed basilisks in 's
eyes;

He's nothing else but murder; yet he
seems 160

Not to have notice of the duchess' death.
'Tis his cunning; I must follow his
example.

There cannot be a surer way to trace
Than that of an old fox.

[Enter Julia, with a pistol.]

JUL. So, sir, you are well met.

Bos. How now!

JUL. Nay, the doors are fast enough.

Now, sir, I will make you confess your
treachery.

Bos. Treachery? 170

JUL. Yes, confess to me

Which of my women 'twas you hired to
put

Love powder into my drink.

Bos. Love powder!

JUL. Yes, when I was at Malfi.

Why should I fall in love with such a
face else?

I have already suffered for thee so much
pain,

The only remedy to do me good

Is to kill my longing.

Bos. Sure, your pistol holds

Nothing but perfumes or kissing-comfits.²

Excellent lady, 179

You have a pretty way on 't to discover

Your longing. Come, come, I'll disarm

you,

And arm ³ you thus. Yet this is wondrous
strange.

JUL. Compare thy form and my eyes to-
gether,

You'll find my love no such great miracle.

Now you'll say

I am wanton. This nice modesty in ladies

Is but a troublesome familiar ⁴

That haunts them.

Bos. Know you me; I am a blunt soldier.

JUL. The better.

Sure, there wants fire where there are no

lively sparks

Of roughness. 190

Bos. And I want compliment.

JUL. Why, ignorance

² Sweetmeats for the breath.

³ Embrace.

⁴ Spirit.

- In courtship cannot make you do amiss,
If you have a heart to do well.
- Bos. You are very fair.
- JUL. Nay, if you lay beauty to my charge,
I must plead unguilty.
- Bos. Your bright eyes
Carry a quiver of darts in them, sharper
Than sunbeams.
- JUL. You will mar me with
commendation;
Put yourself to the charge of courting me,
Whereas now I woo you.
- Bos. [*Aside.*] I have it; I will work upon
this creature.— 200
Let us grow most amorously familiar.
If the great cardinal now should see me
thus,
Would he not count me a villain?
- JUL. No; he might count me a wanton,
Not lay a scruple of offense on you;
For, if I see and steal a diamond,
The fault is not i' th' stone, but in me,
the thief
That purloins it. I am sudden with you.
We that are great women of pleasure use
to cut off
These uncertain wishes and unquiet long-
ings, 210
And in an instant join the sweet delight
And the pretty excuse together. Had you
been i' th' street,
Under my chamber window, even
there
I should have courted you.
- Bos. O, you are an excellent lady!
- JUL. Bid me do somewhat for you pres-
ently
To express I love you.
- Bos. I will; and, if you love me, fail not to
effect it.
The cardinal is grown wondrous melan-
choly;
Demand the cause; let him not put you
off 220
With feigned excuse; discover the main
ground on 't.
- JUL. Why would you know this?
- Bos. I have depended on him,
And I hear that he is fall'n in some dis-
grace
With the emperor. If he be, like the
mice
That forsake falling houses, I would shift
To other dependence.
- JUL. You shall not need follow the
wars—
I'll be your maintenance.
- Bos. And I your loyal servant;
But I cannot leave my calling.
- JUL. Not leave an
Ungrateful general for the love of a sweet
lady!
You are like some cannot sleep in feather
beds, 230
But must have blocks for their pillows.
- Bos. Will you do this?
- JUL. Cunningly.
- Bos. Tomorrow I'll expect th' intelli-
gence.
- JUL. Tomorrow! Get you into my cabinet;
You shall have it with you. Do not delay
me,
No more than I do you. I am like one
That is condemned; I have my pardon
promised,
But I would see it sealed. Go, get you in;
You shall see me wind my tongue about
his heart
Like a skein of silk. [*Exit Bosola.*]
- Enter Cardinal.*]
- CARD. Where are you?
- [Enter Servants.]*
- SERVANTS. Here.
- CARD. Let none, upon your lives, 241
Have conference with the Prince Fer-
dinand,
Unless I know it. [*Exeunt Servants.*]
[*Aside.*] In this distraction
He may reveal the murder.
Yond's my lingering consumption.
I am weary of her, and by any means
Would be quit of.
- JUL. How now, my lord! What ails you?
- CARD. Nothing.
- JUL. O, you are much altered.
Come, I must be your secretary,¹ and
remove
This lead from off your bosom. What's
the matter? 250
- CARD. I may not tell you.
- JUL. Are you so far in love with sorrow
You cannot part with part of it? O
think you
- ¹ Sharer of secrets.