

V

THE ORPHAN

One bed has held us, and the same desires,
The same aversions, still employed our thoughts.
Whene'er had I a friend that was not Polydore's?
Or Polydore a foe, that was not mine? 380
Even in the womb we embraced; and wilt thou now,
For the first fault, abandon and forsake me?
Leave me amidst afflictions to myself?
Plunged in the gulf of grief, and none to help me?

POLYDORE.

Go to Monimia. In her arms thou'lt find 385
Repose. She has the art of healing sorrows—

CASTALIO.

What arts?

POLYDORE. Blind wretch, thou husband! There's a ques-
tion!

Go to her fulsome bed, and wallow there
Till some hot ruffian, full of lust and wine,
Come storm thee out, and show thee what's thy bar-
gain— 390

CASTALIO.

Hold there, I charge thee—

POLYDORE. Is she not a—

CASTALIO. Whore?

POLYDORE.

Ay, whore— I think that word needs no explaining.

CASTALIO.

Alas! I can forgive ev'n this to thee;
But let me tell thee, Polydore, I'm grieved
To find thee guilty of such low revenge 395
To wrong that virtue which thou couldst not ruin.

POLYDORE.

It seems I lie then.

CASTALIO. Should the bravest man
That e'er wore conquering sword, but dare to whisper
What thou proclaim'st, he were the worst of liars.
My friend may be mistaken.

397. *It seem I lie then*] The quarrel progresses in five stages of calculated insult to the lie direct, but the word *coward* precipitates the duel. Cf. Touchstone on the "seven degrees of the lie," *As You Like It*, V.iv.94 ff.

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POLYDORE. Damn the evasion! 400
Thou mean'st the worst, and he's a base-born villain
That said I lied. [*Draws his sword.*]

CASTALIO.

Do, draw thy sword, and thrust it through my heart!
There's no joy in life, if thou art lost—
A base-born villain—

POLYDORE. Yes. Thou never camest 405

From old Acasto's loins. The midwife put
A cheat upon my mother, and instead
Of a true brother, in the cradle by me
Placed some coarse peasant's cub—and thou art he!

CASTALIO.

Thou art my brother still.

POLYDORE.

Thou liest.

CASTALIO.

Nay then— 410
He draws.

Yet I am calm.

POLYDORE. A coward's always so.

CASTALIO.

Ah—ah— that stings home: coward!

POLYDORE.

Ay, base-born coward—villain.

CASTALIO.

This to thy heart then, though my mother bore thee.

They fight. Polydore drops his sword, and runs on Castalio's.

POLYDORE.

Now my Castalio is again my friend! 415

CASTALIO.

What have I done? My sword is in thy breast.

POLYDORE.

So I would have it be, thou best of men,
Thou kindest brother, and thou truest friend.

CASTALIO.

Ye gods! We're taught that all your works are justice.
Y'are painted merciful, and friends to innocence. 420
If so, then why these plagues upon my head?

POLYDORE.

Blame not the Heav'ns; here lies thy fate, Castalio.