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Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Ririro

Scenes From "Politian"

I.

ROME--A Hall in a Palace

ALESSANDRA and CASTIGLIONE.

ALESSANDRA

Thou art sad, Castiglione.

CASTIGLIONE

Sad!--not I.

Oh, I'm the happiest, happiest man in Rome!

A few days more, thou knowest, my Alessandra,

Will make thee mine. Oh, I am very happy!

ALESSANDRA.

Methinks thou hast a singular way of showing

Thy happiness!--what ails thee, cousin of mine?

Why didst thou sigh so deeply?

CASTIGLIONE

I was not conscious of it. It is a fashion,

A silly--a most silly fashion I have

When I am very happy. Did I sigh? (Sighing)

ALESSANDRA

Thou didst. Thou art not well. Thou hast indulged

Too much of late, and I am vexed to see it.

Late hours and wine, Castiglione,--these

Will ruin thee! thou art already altered--

Thy looks are haggard--nothing so wears away

The constitution as late hours and wine.

CASTIGLIONE (musing)

Nothing, fair cousin, nothing--not even deep sorrow--
Wears it away like evil hours and wine.

I will amend.

ALESSANDRA

Do it! I would have thee drop
Thy riotous company, too--fellows low born--
Ill suit the like with old Di Broglio's heir
And Alessandra's husband.

CASTIGLIONE

I will drop them.

ALESSANDRA

Thou wilt--thou must. Attend thou also more
To thy dress and equipage--they are over plain
For thy lofty rank and fashion--much depends
Upon appearances.

CASTIGLIONE

I'll see to it.

ALESSANDRA

Then see to it!--pay more attention, sir,
To a becoming carriage--much thou wantest
In dignity.

CASTIGLIONE

Much, much, oh! much I want
In proper dignity.

ALESSANDRA (haughtily)

Thou mockest me, sir.

CASTIGLIONE (abstractedly)

Sweet, gentle Lalage!



ALESSANDRA

Heard I aright?

Speak to him--he speaks of Lalage!

Sir Count! (places her hand on his shoulder) what art thou dreaming?

(aside) He's not well!

What ails thee, sir?

CASTIGLIONE (starting)

Cousin! fair cousin!--madam!

I crave thy pardon--indeed I am not well--

Your hand from off my shoulder, if you please.

This air is most oppressive!--Madam--the Duke!

(Enter DI BROGLIO)

DI BROGLIO

My son, I've news for thee!--hey?--what's the matter?

(observing Alessandra)

I' the pouts? Kiss her, Castiglione! kiss her,

You dog! and make it up, I say, this minute!

I've news for you both. Politian is expected

Hourly in Rome--Politian, Earl of Leicester!
We'll have him at the wedding. 'Tis his first visit
To the imperial city.

ALESSANDRA

What! Politian
Of Britain, Earl of Leicester?

DI BROGLIO

The same, my love.
We'll have him at the wedding. A man quite young
In years, but grey in fame. I have not seen him,
But Rumour speaks of him as of a prodigy
Preeminent in arts and arms, and wealth,
As of one who entered madly into life,
Drinking the cup of pleasure to the dregs.
And high descent. We'll have him at the wedding.

ALESSANDRA

I have heard much of this Politian.
Gay, volatile and giddy--is he not?
And little given to thinking.

DI BROGLIO

Far from it, love.
No branch, they say, of all philosophy
So deep abstruse he has not mastered it.
Learned as few are learned.

ALESSANDRA

'Tis very strange!
I have known men have seen Politian
And sought his company. They speak of him
As of one who entered madly into life,
Drinking the cup of pleasure to the dregs.

CASTIGLIONE

Ridiculous! Now I have seen Politian
And know him well--nor learned nor he.
He is a dreamer, and a man shut out
From common passions.

DI BROGLIO

Children, we disagree.
Let us go forth and taste the fragrant air
Of the garden. Did I dream, or did I hear
Politian was a melancholy man? (Exeunt)

II.

ROME--A Lady's apartment, with a window open and
looking into a
garden. LALAGE, in deep mourning, reading at a table
on which lie

some books and a hand mirror. In the background
JACINTA (a servant
maid) leans carelessly upon a chair.

LALAGE.

Jacinta, is it thou?

JACINTA (pertly)

Yes, ma'am, I'm here.

LALAGE.

I did not know, Jacinta, you were in waiting.
Sit down!--Let not my presence trouble you--
Sit down!--for I am humble, most humble.

JACINTA (aside)

'Tis time.

(JACINTA seats herself in a side-long manner upon the
chair,
resting her elbows upon the back, and regarding her

mistress

with a contemptuous look. LALAGE continues to read.)

LALAGE

"It in another climate, so he said,

"Bore a bright golden flower, but not this soil!"

(pauses--turns over some leaves, and resumes)

"No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower--

"But Ocean ever to refresh mankind

"Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind."

O, beautiful!--most beautiful--how like

To what my fevered soul doth dream of Heaven!

O happy land (pauses) She died!--the maiden died!

A still more happy maiden who couldst die!

Jacinta!

(JACINTA returns no answer, and LALAGE presently resumes)

Again!--a similar tale

Told of a beauteous dame beyond the sea!

Thus speaketh one Ferdinand in the words of the play--

"She died full young"--one Bossola answers him--

"I think not so--her infelicity

"Seemed to have years too many"--Ah luckless lady!

Jacinta! (still no answer)

Here 's a far sterner story,

But like--oh, very like in its despair--

Of that Egyptian queen, winning so easily

A thousand hearts--losing at length her own.

She died. Thus endeth the history--and her maids

Lean over and weep--two gentle maids

With gentle names--Eiros and Charmion!
Rainbow and Dove!--Jacinta!

JACINTA (pettishly)

Madam, what is it?

LALAGE

Wilt thou, my good Jacinta, be so kind
As go down in the library and bring me
The Holy Evangelists?

JACINTA

Pshaw! (Exit)

LALAGE

If there be balm
For the wounded spirit in Gilead it is there!
Dew in the night-time of my bitter trouble
Will there be found--"dew sweeter far than that
Which hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill."
(Re-enter JACINTA, and throws a volume on the table)
There, ma'am, 's the book. Indeed she is very
troublesome. (Aside)

LALAGE (astonished)

What didst thou say, Jacinta? Have I done aught
To grieve thee or to vex thee?--I am sorry.
For thou hast served me long and ever been
Trustworthy and respectful. (resumes her reading)

JACINTA (aside)

I can't believe

She has any more jewels--no--no--she gave me all.

LALAGE

What didst thou say, Jacinta? Now I bethink me
Thou hast not spoken lately of thy wedding.
How fares good Ugo?--and when is it to be?

Can I do aught?--is there no farther aid
Thou needest, Jacinta?

JACINTA

Is there no farther aid!

That's meant for me (aside). I'm sure, madam, you need
not

Be always throwing those jewels in my teeth.

LALAGE

Jewels! Jacinta,--now indeed, Jacinta,
I thought not of the jewels.

JACINTA

Oh! perhaps not!

But then I might have sworn it. After all,
There 's Ugo says the ring is only paste,
For he 's sure the Count Castiglione never
Would have given a real diamond to such as you;
And at the best I'm certain, madam, you cannot
Have use for jewels now. But I might have sworn it.
(Exit)

(LALAGE bursts into tears and leans her head upon the
table--after a short pause raises it)

LALAGE

Poor Lalage!--and is it come to this?
Thy servant maid!--but courage!--'tis but a viper
Whom thou hast cherished to sting thee to the soul!

(Taking up the mirror)

Ha! here at least 's a friend--too much a friend
In earlier day--a friend will not deceive thee.
Fair mirror and true! now tell me (for thou canst)
A tale--a pretty tale--and heed thou not
Though it be rife with woe. It answers me.

It speaks of sunken eyes, and wasted cheeks,
And Beauty long deceased--remembers me
Of Joy departed--Hope, the Seraph Hope,
Inurned and entombed:--now, in a tone
Low, sad, and solemn, but most audible,
Whispers of early grave untimely yawning
For ruined maid. Fair mirror and true--thou liest not!
Thou hast no end to gain--no heart to break--
Castiglione lied who said he loved--
Thou true--he false!--false!--false!
(While she speaks, a monk enters her apartment, and
approaches unobserved)

MONK

Refuge thou hast,
Sweet daughter, in Heaven. Think of eternal things!
Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray!
LALAGE (arising hurriedly)
I cannot pray!--My soul is at war with God!
The frightful sounds of merriment below
Disturb my senses--go! I cannot pray--
The sweet airs from the garden worry me!
Thy presence grieves me--go!--thy priestly raiment
Fills me with dread--thy ebony crucifix
With horror and awe!

MONK

Think of thy precious soul!

LALAGE

Think of my early days!--think of my father
And mother in Heaven think of our quiet home,
And the rivulet that ran before the door!
Think of my little sisters!--think of them!

And think of me!--think of my trusting love
And confidence--his vows--my ruin--think--think
Of my unspeakable misery!--begone!
Yet stay! yet stay!--what was it thou saidst of prayer
And penitence? Didst thou not speak of faith
And vows before the throne?

MONK

I did.

LALAGE

'Tis well.

There is a vow were fitting should be made--
A sacred vow, imperative, and urgent,
A solemn vow!

MONK

Daughter, this zeal is well.

LALAGE

Father, this zeal is anything but well!
Hast thou a crucifix fit for this thing?
A crucifix whereon to register
This sacred vow? (He hands her his own)
Not that--Oh! no!--no!--no! (Shuddering)
Not that! Not that!--I tell thee, holy man,
Thy raiments and thy ebony cross affright me!
Stand back! I have a crucifix myself,-
I have a crucifix Methinks 'twere fitting
The deed--the vow--the symbol of the deed--
And the deed's register should tally, father!
(Draws a cross-handled dagger, and raises it on high)
Behold the cross wherewith a vow like mine
Is written in Heaven!

MONK

Thy words are madness, daughter,
And speak a purpose unholy--thy lips are livid--
Thine eyes are wild--tempt not the wrath divine!
Pause ere too late!--oh, be not--be not rash!
Swear not the oath--oh, swear it not!

LALAGE

'Tis sworn!

III.

An apartment in a Palace. POLITIAN and BALDAZZAR
BALDAZZAR

-Arouse thee now, Politian!
Thou must not--nay indeed, indeed, shalt not
Give away unto these humors. Be thyself!
Shake off the idle fancies that beset thee,
And live, for now thou diest!

POLITIAN

Not so, Baldazzar
Surely I live.

BALDAZZAR

Politian, it doth grieve me
To see thee thus.

POLITIAN

Baldazzar, it doth grieve me
To give thee cause for grief, my honored friend.
Command me, sir! what wouldst thou have me do?
At thy behest I will shake off that nature
Which from my, forefathers I did inherit,
Which with my mother's milk I did imbibe,
And be no more Politian, but some other.
Command me, sir!

BALDAZZAR

To the field, then--to the field--

To the senate or the field.

POLITIAN.

Alas! Alas!

There is an imp would follow me even there!

There is an imp hath followed me even there!

There is--what voice was that?

BALDAZZAR

I heard it not.

I heard not any voice except thine own,

And the echo of thine own.

POLITIAN

Then I but dreamed.

BALDAZZAR

Give not thy soul to dreams: the camp--the court,

Befit thee--Fame awaits thee--Glory calls--

And her, the trumpet-tongued, thou wilt not hear

In hearkening to imaginary sounds

And phantom voices.

POLITIAN

It is a phantom voice!

Didst thou not hear it then?

BALDAZZAR

I heard it not.

POLITIAN

Thou heardst it not!--Baldazaar, speak no more

To me, Politian, of thy camps and courts.

Oh I am sick, sick, even unto death,

Of the hollow and high-sounding vanities

Of the populous Earth! Bear with me yet awhile!

We have been boys together--schoolfellows--
And now are friends--yet shall not be so long--
For in the eternal city thou shalt do me
A kind and gentle office, and a Power
A Power august, benignant and supreme--
Shall then absolve thee of all further duties
Unto thy friend.

BALDAZZAR

Thou speakest a fearful riddle
I will not understand.

POLITIAN

Yet now as Fate
Approaches, and the Hours are breathing low,
The sands of Time are changed to golden grains,
And dazzle me, Baldazzar. Alas! alas!
I cannot die, having within my heart
So keen a relish for the beautiful
As hath been kindled within it. Methinks the air
Is balmier now than it was wont to be,-
Rich melodies are floating in the winds-
A rarer loveliness bedecks the earth-
And with a holier lustre the quiet moon
Sitteth in Heaven.--Hist! hist! thou canst not say
Thou hearest not now, Baldazzar?

BALDAZZAR

Indeed I hear not.

POLITIAN

Not hear it!--listen now!--listen!--the faintest sound
And yet the sweetest that ear ever heard!
A lady's voice!--and sorrow in the tone!
Baldazzar, it oppresses me like a spell!

Again!--again!--how solemnly it falls
Into my heart of hearts! that eloquent voice
Surely I never heard--yet it were well
Had I but heard it with its thrilling tones
In earlier days!

BALDAZZAR

I myself hear it now.
Be still!--the voice, if I mistake not greatly,
Proceeds from yonder lattice--which you may see
Very plainly through the window--it belongs,
Does it not? unto this palace of the Duke?
The singer is undoubtedly beneath
The roof of his Excellency--and perhaps
Is even that Alessandra of whom he spoke
As the betrothed of Castiglione,
His son and heir.

POLITIAN

Be still!--it comes again!

VOICE (very faintly)

"And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus
Who hath loved thee so long
In wealth and woe among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay--say nay!"

BALDAZZAR

The song is English, and I oft have heard it
In merry England--never so plaintively--
Hist! hist! it comes again!

VOICE (more loudly)

"Is it so strong
As for to leave me thus
Who hath loved thee so long
In wealth and woe among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay--say nay!"

BALDAZZAR

'Tis hushed and all is still!

POLITIAN

All is not still!

BALDAZZAR

Let us go down.

POLITIAN

Go down, Baldazzar, go!

BALDAZZAR

The hour is growing late--the Duke awaits use--
Thy presence is expected in the hall
Below. What ails thee, Earl Politian?

VOICE (distinctly)

"Who hath loved thee so long
In wealth and woe among,
And is thy heart so strong?
Say nay--say nay!"

BALDAZZAR

Let us descend--'tis time. Politian, give
These fancies to the wind. Remember, pray,
Your bearing lately savored much of rudeness
Unto the Duke. Arouse thee! and remember

POLITIAN

Remember? I do. lead on! I do remember.

(Going)

Let us descend. Believe me I would give,
Freely would give the broad lands of my earldom
To look upon the face hidden by yon lattice--
"To gaze upon that veiled face, and hear
Once more that silent tongue."

BALDAZZAR

Let me beg you, sir,
Descend with me--the Duke may be offended.
Let us go down, I pray you.

VOICE (loudly)

Say nay!--say nay!

POLITIAN (aside)

'Tis strange!--'tis very strange--methought the voice
Chimed in with my desires, and bade me stay!

(Approaching the window)

Sweet voice! I heed thee, and will surely stay.
Now be this Fancy, by Heaven or be it Fate,
Still will I not descend. Baldazzar make
Apology unto the Duke for me;
I go not down to-night.

BALDAZZAR

Your lordship's pleasure
Shall be attended to. Good-night, Politian.

POLITIAN

Good-night, my friend, good-night.

IV.

The gardens of a Palace--Moonlight

LALAGE, and POLITIAN

LALAGE

And dost thou speak of love
To me, Politian?--dost thou speak of love
To Lalage?--ah, woe--ah, woe is me!
This mockery is most cruel--most cruel indeed!

POLITIAN

Weep not! oh, sob not thus!--thy bitter tears
Will madden me. Oh, mourn not, Lalage--
Be comforted! I know--I know it all,
And still I speak of love. Look at me, brightest
And beautiful Lalage!--turn here thine eyes!
Thou askest me if I could speak of love,
Knowing what I know, and seeing what I have seen.
Thou askest me that--and thus I answer thee--
Thus on my bended knee I answer thee. (Kneeling)
Sweet Lalage, I love thee--love thee--love thee;
Thro' good and ill--thro' weal and woe I love thee.
Not mother, with her first-born on her knee,
Thrills with intenser love than I for thee.
Not on God's altar, in any time or clime,
Burned there a holier fire than burneth now
Within my spirit for thee. And do I love? (Arising)
Even for thy woes I love thee--even for thy woes--
Thy beauty and thy woes.

LALAGE

Alas, proud Earl,
Thou dost forget thyself, remembering me!
How, in thy father's halls, among the maidens
Pure and reproachless of thy princely line,
Could the dishonored Lalage abide?
Thy wife, and with a tainted memory--

MY seared and blighted name, how would it tally
With the ancestral honors of thy house,
And with thy glory?

POLITIAN

Speak not to me of glory!
I hate--I loathe the name; I do abhor
The unsatisfactory and ideal thing.
Art thou not Lalage and I Politian?
Do I not love--art thou not beautiful--
What need we more? Ha! glory!--now speak not of it.
By all I hold most sacred and most solemn--
By all my wishes now--my fears hereafter--
By all I scorn on earth and hope in heaven--
There is no deed I would more glory in,
Than in thy cause to scoff at this same glory
And trample it under foot. What matters it--
What matters it, my fairest, and my best,
That we go down unhonored and forgotten
Into the dust--so we descend together.
Descend together--and then--and then, perchance--

LALAGE

Why dost thou pause, Politian?

POLITIAN

And then, perchance
Arise together, Lalage, and roam
The starry and quiet dwellings of the blest,
And still--

LALAGE

Why dost thou pause, Politian?

POLITIAN

And still together--together.

LALAGE

Now Earl of Leicester!

Thou lovest me, and in my heart of hearts

I feel thou lovest me truly.

POLITIAN

Oh, Lalage!

(Throwing himself upon his knee)

And lovest thou me?

LALAGE

Hist! hush! within the gloom

Of yonder trees methought a figure passed--

A spectral figure, solemn, and slow, and noiseless--

Like the grim shadow Conscience, solemn and noiseless.

(Walks across and returns)

I was mistaken--'twas but a giant bough

Stirred by the autumn wind. Politian!

POLITIAN

My Lalage--my love! why art thou moved?

Why dost thou turn so pale? Not Conscience' self,

Far less a shadow which thou likenest to it,

Should shake the firm spirit thus. But the night wind

Is chilly--and these melancholy boughs

Throw over all things a gloom.

LALAGE

Politian!

Thou speakest to me of love. Knowest thou the land

With which all tongues are busy--a land new found--

Miraculously found by one of Genoa--

A thousand leagues within the golden west?

A fairy land of flowers, and fruit, and sunshine,

And crystal lakes, and over-arching forests,

And mountains, around whose towering summits the
winds
Of Heaven untrammelled flow--which air to breathe
Is Happiness now, and will be Freedom hereafter
In days that are to come?

POLITIAN

O, wilt thou--wilt thou
Fly to that Paradise--my Lalage, wilt thou
Fly thither with me? There Care shall be forgotten,
And Sorrow shall be no more, and Eros be all.
And life shall then be mine, for I will live
For thee, and in thine eyes--and thou shalt be
No more a mourner--but the radiant Joys
Shall wait upon thee, and the angel Hope
Attend thee ever; and I will kneel to thee
And worship thee, and call thee my beloved,
My own, my beautiful, my love, my wife,
My all;--oh, wilt thou--wilt thou, Lalage,
Fly thither with me?

LALAGE

A deed is to be done--
Castiglione lives!

POLITIAN

And he shall die! (Exit)

LALAGE (after a pause)

And--he--shall--die!--alas!

Castiglione die? Who spoke the words?

Where am I?--what was it he said?--Politian!

Thou art not gone--thou are not gone, Politian!

I feel thou art not gone--yet dare not look,

Lest I behold thee not; thou couldst not go

With those words upon thy lips--O, speak to me!
And let me hear thy voice--one word--one word,
To say thou art not gone,--one little sentence,
To say how thou dost scorn--how thou dost hate
My womanly weakness. Ha! ha! thou art not gone--
O speak to me! I knew thou wouldst not go!
I knew thou wouldst not, couldst not, durst not go.
Villain, thou art not gone--thou mockest me!
And thus I clutch thee--thus!--He is gone, he is gone
Gone--gone. Where am I?--'tis well--'tis very well!
So that the blade be keen--the blow be sure,
'Tis well, 'tis very well--alas! alas!

V.

The suburbs. POLITIAN alone

POLITIAN

This weakness grows upon me. I am faint,
And much I fear me ill--it will not do
To die ere I have lived!--Stay, stay thy hand,
O Azrael, yet awhile!--Prince of the Powers
Of Darkness and the Tomb, O pity me!
O pity me! let me not perish now,
In the budding of my Paradisal Hope!
Give me to live yet--yet a little while:
'Tis I who pray for life--I who so late
Demanded but to die!--what sayeth the Count?

(Enter BALDAZZAR)

BALDAZZAR

That knowing no cause of quarrel or of feud
Between the Earl Politian and himself.
He doth decline your cartel.

POLITIAN

What didst thou say?

What answer was it you brought me, good Baldazzar?

With what excessive fragrance the zephyr comes

Laden from yonder bowers!--a fairer day,

Or one more worthy Italy, methinks

No mortal eyes have seen!--what said the Count?

BALDAZZAR

That he, Castiglione' not being aware

Of any feud existing, or any cause

Of quarrel between your lordship and himself,

Cannot accept the challenge.

POLITIAN

It is most true--

All this is very true. When saw you, sir,

When saw you now, Baldazzar, in the frigid

Ungenial Britain which we left so lately,

A heaven so calm as this--so utterly free

From the evil taint of clouds?--and he did say?

BALDAZZAR

No more, my lord, than I have told you, sir:

The Count Castiglione will not fight,

Having no cause for quarrel.

POLITIAN

Now this is true--

All very true. Thou art my friend, Baldazzar,

And I have not forgotten it--thou'lt do me

A piece of service; wilt thou go back and say

Unto this man, that I, the Earl of Leicester,

Hold him a villain?--thus much, I prythee, say

Unto the Count--it is exceeding just
He should have cause for quarrel.

BALDAZZAR

My lord!--my friend!--

POLITIAN (aside)

'Tis he!--he comes himself? (aloud) Thou reasonest well.
I know what thou wouldst say--not send the
message--

Well!--I will think of it--I will not send it.

Now prythee, leave me--hither doth come a person
With whom affairs of a most private nature

I would adjust.

BALDAZZAR

I go--to-morrow we meet, Do we not?--at the Vatican.

POLITIAN

At the Vatican.

(Exit BALDAZZAR)

Enter CASTIGLIONE

CASTIGLIONE

The Earl of Leicester here!

POLITIAN

I am the Earl of Leicester, and thou seest,
Dost thou not? that I am here.

CASTIGLIONE

My lord, some strange,

Some singular mistake--misunderstanding--

Hath without doubt arisen: thou hast been urged

Thereby, in heat of anger, to address

Some words most unaccountable, in writing,

To me, Castiglione; the bearer being

Baldazzar, Duke of Surrey. I am aware

Of nothing which might warrant thee in this thing,
Having given thee no offence. Ha!--am I right?

'Twas a mistake?--undoubtedly--we all

Do err at times.

POLITIAN

Draw, villain, and prate no more!

CASTIGLIONE

Ha!--draw?--and villain? have at thee then at once,
Proud Earl! (Draws)

POLITIAN (drawing)

Thus to the expiatory tomb,
Untimely sepulchre, I do devote thee
In the name of Lalage!

CASTIGLIONE

(letting fall his sword and recoiling to
the extremity of the stage)

Of Lalage!

Hold off--thy sacred hand!--avaunt, I say!

Avaunt--I will not fight thee--indeed I dare not.

POLITIAN

Thou wilt not fight with me didst say, Sir Count?

Shall I be baffled thus?--now this is well;

Didst say thou darest not? Ha!

CASTIGLIONE

I dare not--dare not--

Hold off thy hand--with that beloved name

So fresh upon thy lips I will not fight thee--

I cannot--dare not.

POLITIAN

Now by my halidom

I do believe thee!--coward, I do believe thee!

CASTIGLIONE

Ha!--coward!--this may not be!

(Clutches his sword and staggers towards POLITIAN,
but

his purpose is changed before reaching him, and he
falls upon his knee at the feet of the Earl)

Alas! my lord,

It is--it is--most true. In such a cause

I am the veriest coward. O pity me!

POLITIAN (greatly softened)

Alas!--I do--indeed I pity thee.

CASTIGLIONE

And Lalage--

POLITIAN

Scoundrel!--arise and die!

CASTIGLIONE

It needeth not be--thus--thus--O let me die

Thus on my bended knee. It were most fitting

That in this deep humiliation I perish.

For in the fight I will not raise a hand

Against thee, Earl of Leicester. Strike thou home--

(Baring his bosom)

Here is no let or hindrance to thy weapon--

Strike home. I will not fight thee.

POLITIAN

Now, s' Death and Hell!

Am I not--am I not sorely--grievously tempted

To take thee at thy word? But mark me, sir,

Think not to fly me thus. Do thou prepare

For public insult in the streets--before

The eyes of the citizens. I'll follow thee

Like an avenging spirit I'll follow thee
Even unto death. Before those whom thou lovest-
Before all Rome I'll taunt thee, villain,--I'll taunt thee,
Dost hear? with cowardice--thou wilt not fight me?
Thou liest! thou shalt! (Exit)

CASTIGLIONE

Now this indeed is just!
Most righteous, and most just, avenging Heaven!