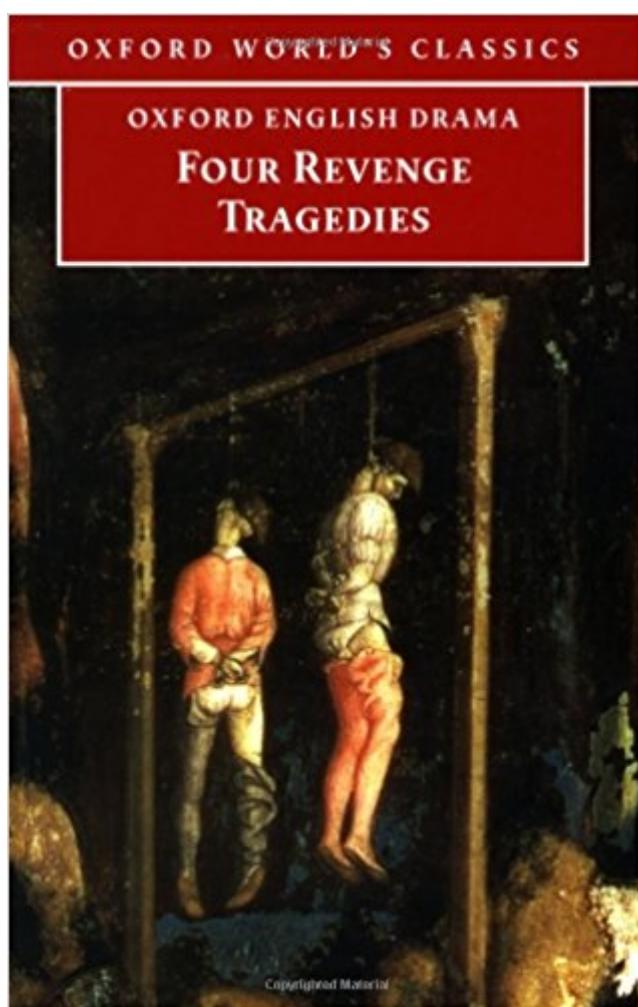


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# Four Revenge Tragedies: The Spanish Tragedy; The Revenger's Tragedy; The Revenge Of Bussy D'Ambois; And The Atheist's Tragedy (Oxford World's Classics)





## **Synopsis**

The Revenge Tragedy flourished in Britain during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The classic ingredients of the genre are a quest for vengeance, mad scenes, a play within a play, and carnage. Each of the four plays here subverts the genre, and deals with fundamental moral questions about justice and the individual, while registering the strains of life in an increasingly fragile social hierarchy. This edition includes Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, the anonymous *The Revenger's Tragedy* (variously ascribed to Cyril Tourneur and Thomas Middleton), *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* by George Chapman, and Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy*.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"A provocative selection with incisive apparatus."--Gale H. Carrithers, Jr., Louisiana State University

Katharine Maus is Associate Professor of English at the University of Virginia.

An excellent collection! *THE SPANISH TRAGEDY*, of course, is the mother of all English Renaissance revenge tragedies, and it still holds up well today. It inaugurated the fashion that culminated in Shakespeare's *HAMLET*. *THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY*, probably by Middleton, is another strange and wonderful tragedy, full of skulls and poison and dramatic ironies. *Revenge*

tragedies are intensely political; they typically involve a terrible murder committed by someone in power, and the court is so corrupt that only extra-legal means for justice or revenge are available. Revenge tragedies always include sensational elements of violence and the macabre that made them very popular in their time. Feigned or real madness, poison, bloodshed, skulls and graveyards abound. Sexual obsession and incest are common. The only modern comparison that seems justified is the horror movie; of course these are stage productions with a minimum of scenery, but many of the actions are just as gruesome and horrific, including explorations of strange obsessions and sexual perversions. *THE REVENGE OF BUSSY D'AMBOIS* by Chapman is notable for the elevated language, but hard to follow since it is a sequel without the original. Chapman's drama, however, is rarely published today, so it's nice to have it. *THE ATHEIST'S TRAGEDY* by Tourneur is amazing for its seeming nihilism. Evil triumphs here. The introduction is also helpful and interesting after you've read the plays. The only fault here is the editing; the editors have inexplicably chosen to use endnotes, which are very inconvenient.

In his tragically short life, Thomas Kyd wrote one play that has become a classic. In its day, it was one of the most popular on stage and in print, going through 10 printings in the 40 years after it was written. His language is not as accessible as Shakespeare's, but with careful reading, the attraction of the play to the late Elizabethan audience becomes clear. This was one of the first revenge tragedies. By the end of the play, almost everyone has been killed or committed suicide. There are many plot lines that have echoes in Shakespeare's Hamlet. Students of that play should find it worth their time to discover what is considered by many scholars to be an influence on Mr. W.S.

This brilliant play is one of the inaugurators of Elizabethan drama and unfortunately rarely performed. The poetry still resonates even in written form. To appreciate what follows, it is advisable to start with Kyd. Shakespeare, Jonson took their cues from him. A revenge play or the Theatre of Blood this play should strike a chord with modern audiences, accustomed to cinematic excesses. It is curious that Kyd does not have a greater following than he does. Simply put, the play will delight and profoundly answer many questions as to why Elizabethan drama is so pertinent even to this day.

I was using this Kindle edition of the text hand in hand with a physical one when studying the play for a class. I did not find any errors or changes between the two editions.

This is an Elizabethan metatheatrical revenge play presented as a dream with several inserted

plays within it.

The footnotes were helpful, but placed all the way at the back of the book, so you'll waste a lot of time flipping through pages to find them.

Perfect!!!

Is a book.

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