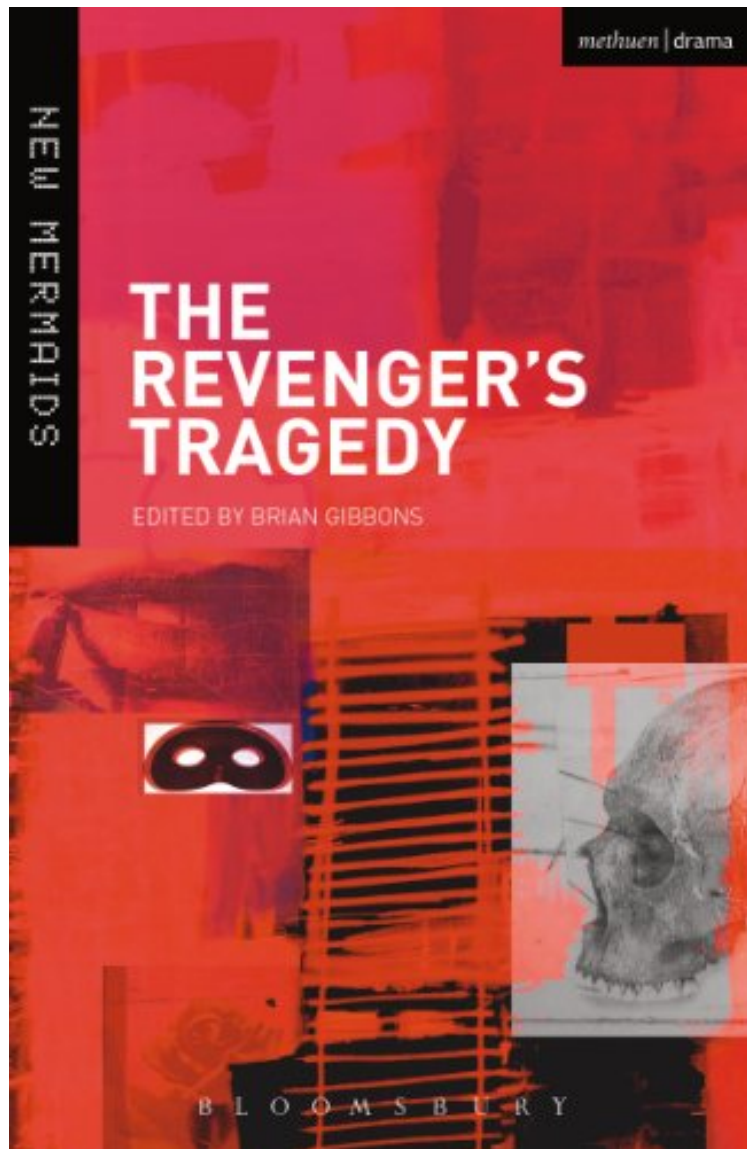


(Mobile ebook) The Revenger's Tragedy (New Mermaids)

The Revenger's Tragedy (New Mermaids)

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From Methuen Drama : **The Revenger's Tragedy (New Mermaids)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Revenger's Tragedy (New Mermaids):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Undecided Authorship, but Certainly Good Drama
By Michael Wischmeyer
Brian Gibbons, editor of the New Mermaids second edition (1991), describes The Revenger's Tragedy (1607) as a minor masterpiece. Judged against contemporaneous revenge plays like Hamlet and King Lear (and even Titus Andronicus), the term 'minor' certainly does not imply inferior. Minor or not, The Revenger's Tragedy deserves five stars. I found it as much easier reading than most Elizabethan and Jacobean plays. Despite its title, The Revenger's

Tragedy is no more bloody than Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (fifteen years earlier) and it is certainly not as insanely gruesome and brutal as Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1594). No dismemberments and no cannibalism. Bloody, yes. But not excessively so. Nonetheless, we learn of a murder, a rape leading to a suicide, and yet another aggressive seduction (or rape, if need be) that is in the planning stage. So ends Act 1. Revenge and mayhem follow. The plot is not unduly complex. Vindice desires revenge for the poisoning death of his betrothed, Gloriana, by the lustful, aging Duke. Vindice also indirectly blames the Duke for his father's death, though "he died of discontent, the nobleman's consumption". Vindice is perhaps obsessive; he has retained Gloriana's skull and sometimes speaks directly to her. In disguise he provokes discord between his enemies and leads them to plot against each other. (This ruse reminds me of Malevole's subterfuge in John Marston's play, *The Malcontent*.) A poisoned skull, a mistaken execution, and a murderous banquet highlight the later acts. The play concludes with an ironic twist, possibly added as a moral lesson, or simply to surprise the audience. Hats off to either Cyril Tourneur or Thomas Middleton, or whoever may have authored this fascinating revenge play. Update July, 2007: I recently encountered reference to this lesser known play in a murder mystery. Cecil Day-Lewis, Poet Laureate from 1968 until his death in 1972, wrote sophisticated mysteries under the pseudonym Nicholas Blake from the mid-1930s to the early 1960s. *Thou Shell of Death* (1936) is a revenge murder patterned on *The Revenger's Tragedy*. In the first scene Vindice speaking to the skull of his dead mistress says: "My study's ornament, thou shell of death, Once the bright face of my betrothed lady" Note: *The Revenger's Tragedy* is included in the Oxford World's Classics edition titled *Four Revenge Tragedies* (edited by Katherine Eisaman Maus). Her introduction to this inexpensive paperback edition compares *The Revenger's Tragedy* to three contemporaneous revenger plays. 0 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Comedy at its finest. By Coma Crush Obviously the comedy isn't intentional, but it's impossible to read this and keep a straight face. It's even harder to read it aloud, act it out, or write essays on it. If you need a good, sick laugh along with the intellectual challenge of translating early modern English, order this.

"Oh do not jest thy doom"

"How well our barbarous and sex-crazed times relate to the horrors and refined cruelties of Thomas Middleton's extraordinary Jacobean masterpiece...A drama that makes grim, poetic fun of lust-filled aristocrats and lesser folk up to plenty of bad, some of them steaming hot for sex, adultery, murder and revenge." Nicholas de Jongh, *Evening Standard*, 05.06.08 "There's a sardonic and even sadistic glee in his poetry and...a lot of dark, dangerous laughter to be found in the play." Benedict Nightingale, *The Times*, 06.06.08 "Middleton certainly had a sardonic eye for twisted and compromised morals...His poetry is a vibrant mix of the ornate and the blunt. His so-called tragedy boldly veers into morbid farce, sparking explosive laughter." Kate Bassett, *Independent on Sunday*, 08.06.08 "The Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge tragedies had more nasty killings and a higher body count than almost anything written by today's young pretenders, as well as a similarly steamy interest in perverse sex, too." Charles Spencer, *Daily Telegraph*, 06.06.08 "[Middleton] is black-blooded, foul-mouthed, casual, uncaring - a pioneer of our common tongue, *Ossuary English*." Ian Shuttleworth, *Financial Times*, 10.06.08 About the Author The Editor, Brian Gibbons has been a General Editor of *The New Mermaids* since 1974 and also a General Editor of *The New Cambridge Shakespeare* since its inception. He is the author of many articles about English Drama, of two books, *Jacobean City Comedy* and *Shakespeare and Multiplicity*, and editor of editions in *The New Mermaids* as well as *The Arden Shakespeare* and *The New Cambridge Shakespeare*