

**CESARE BORGIA. A
TRAGEDY
IN ONE ACT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649764419

Cesare Borgia. A Tragedy in One Act by Arthur Symons

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ARTHUR SYMONS

**CESARE BORGIA. A
TRAGEDY
IN ONE ACT**

CESARE BORGIA
A TRAGEDY IN ONE ACT
By ARTHUR SYMONS

THE PERSONS

CESARE BORGIA, *Cardinal of Valencia*

SANCLIA, *Princess of Aragon*

MICHELOTTO, *Cesare's Servant*

LUCREZIA BORGIA, *the Pope's Daughter*

GIOVANNI BORGIA, *Duke of Sandia*

POPE ALEXANDER VI

ASSASSINS

VANNOZZA CATANEI, *the Pope's Mistress*

IMPERIA

SCENE: *Rome, June, 1497.*

CESARE BORGIA

SCENE ONE

A Room of CESARE in the Vatican

Enter CESARE and SANCIA

SANCIA

Why is our flesh more cruel than man's love?

CESARE

There is no love that can outmeasure love.

SANCIA

I only know I am a tortured thing
And none of all the casuists of souls
Can set me dancing in the naked air.

CESARE

I am no Casuit, nor are my nerves tortured
As evil spirits are.

SANCIA

An evil spirit
Burns in you, Cesare. See, how it burns in me!

[3]

CESARE BORGIA

CESARE

Hate not the Beast, that laughs out of the Flesh!
Why do you touch your burning web of hair?

SANCIA

Do I? Sheer nerves, my dear! Rome's hot enough
For our blood's heat to be June's heat. I beat
My feet on the floor, as if one dances.

CESARE

Sancia,
What is obscure and inevitable in ourselves
Comes not from dancing nor from dreaming: dreams
Are the mirror of our consciousness; the dance
The rhythm of our being: but our Fate
Entangles us in a net we can't escape from.

SANCIA

This network that knots my hair — why subtilise
Beyond it?

CESARE

To mock mine own illusions.
There's something monstrous in your kind of beauty,
Yet Beauty, when accursed, becomes less monstrous,
And so more poisonous.

SANCIA

Am I a poison-flower
Grown in a soil only weeds grew in before
Some Satan planted my seed?

CESARE BORGIA

CESARE

Start not, Sancia,
At the shadow the setting sun casts on me — the shadow
Of a mere leaf in the wind.

SANCIA

And if I start?
I tell you, Cesare, there's a wind in my heart
That will not let me rest; there are great wings
Of birds that beat against the winds; storms
Everlasting and the unresting waters; loves
That are more drowsy than the bees at noon
That have trafficked on the heath and sucked the
heather:
And I am all of these and none of these.

CESARE

Find out the dancing measures in our blood
And we'll not blush.

SANCIA

If blushes do become you —
Blush.

CESARE

I am neither sad nor am I sorry
We thus have met. Sadness befits not love;
But since the moon is far and your strange face
No fairer than the moon's, let all the winds
Invade our spirits; but, when we have drunk wine,
Always the dregs remain.

SANCIA

Of all sad songs
This is the saddest men ever sang. Come now,

CESARE BORGIA

There are no ghosts to go along with us;
And you that have so many mistresses
May tire of me that am your Sancia,
Your Sancia of the minute.

CESARE

There's no jesting-time
From this till midnight and when midnight's over
The jests begin: we shall have some wondrous jesting
When craft enters your eyes: you have more craft
Than the street-girls in Naples.

SANCIA

You think of — what?

CESARE

Of nothing.

SANCIA

Nay, of Giovanni.

CESARE

And if I choose to love him? As one tries
To love a thing one hates when one's in bed
And so turns on his pillow and forgets
And, waking, might remember either dream.
You might as well ask of a burning flame
To turn aside from burning not in love
The wood next it on the hearth.

SANCIA

Do you fear God?

[6]

CESARE BORGIA

CESARE

I use his name, I neither fear nor love
God, more than mine own Sire; who, sick at heart,
Fears God; and, with heart at ease after our revels,
Loves God. Our flesh must sleep to live. I sweep
Certain things to sideways, thus!

*He unsheathes his dagger, turns his wrist and
pierces a hole in the wall.*

SANCIA

Madness and nerves,
In these I praise you, Cesare; as for Lucrezia,
I honour her; yea, I am honourless,
And yet I love Lucrezia.

CESARE

One must love her
In her strange tragic beauty; fires of Carthage
Burn in her eyes and Mâtho makes her mad
Because she has given him wine, and madness lies
Wherever poisoned love is mixed with hate.

SANCIA

There may be treason in you against me, Cesare!

CESARE

You might think twice before you think to say it
And I think thrice before I answer you.

SANCIA

You cannot hurt me much, not much, Cesare,
That burn two ways at once.