



THOMAS KYD (1558-1594)

Thomas Kyd born in the year 1558 is one of the famous dramatists of the Elizabethan age. Thomas Kyd remained unknown to the world till 1773 when Thomas Hawkins discovered some connection of his with the revenge tragedy Spanish Tragedy through Heywood's, *Apology for Actors*. John Lyly had a more marked influence on his manner than any of his contemporaries. Thomas Kyd also remained a school fellow of Edmund Spenser and Thomas Lodge. Ben Jonson called him "sporting Kyd." Thomas Kyd is mostly famous for the revenge tragedy *The Spanish Tragedy*. He continued the Senecan tradition of tragedy and his tragedy *The Spanish Tragedy* stands out as the earliest play of the Elizabethan age. He died in the year 1594.

MAJOR WORKS

THE SPANISH TRAGEDY 1592

FULL TITLLE OF *THE SPANISH TRAGEDY, CONTAINING THE LAMENTABLE END OF DON HORATIO, AND BEL-IMPERIA: WITH THE PITTIFULL DEATH OF OLDE HIERONIMO.*

THE SPANISH TRAGEDY (1590) Or HIERONIMO IS MAD AGAIN

SUMMARY

The story begins with the news that the Viceroy of Portugal has rebelled against the Spanish rule. A battle was fought between the Portuguese and the Spaniards, in which the Spaniards defeated the Portuguese and their leader, Balthazar the son of the viceroy was captured; here we come to know that Andrea, the Spanish Officer was killed by Balthazar. As the play progresses the ghost and the spirit of Andrea appears throughout the play who serves as chorus and, at the beginning of each act, Andrea

Expresses discontent on the series of injustice that take place before being reassured by Revenge that those deserving will get desired punishment of their evil deeds. The subplot of the play concerns the enmity of two Portuguese noblemen. In their court one of the noblemen tries to convince the Viceroy that Balthazar has been murdered by his rivals, however he is captured by the Spaniards. On the other side there rises a dispute between Lorenzo the nephew of the king, and Ho The King's nephew Lorenzo and Andrea's best friend Horatio dispute over who captured Balthazar, and though it is made clear early on that it is in fact Horatio that defeated him while Lorenzo essentially cheats his way into taking partial credit, the King leaves Balthazar in Lorenzo's charge and splits the spoils of the victory between the two. Horatio comforts Lorenzo's sister, Bel-imperia, who was in love with Andrea against her family's wishes; though Bel-imperia loved Andrea but now after his death she gets attracted to Horatio and falls in love with her. Her relation with Horatio is also motivated partially by her desire of revenge of Andrea's death from Balthazar. She wanted to torment Balthazar.

However it is revealed that Balthazar is in love with Bel-imperia. Now the story gets complicated we have three characters related to Bel-imperia, they are Andrea, Horatio, and Balthazar, however Bel-imperia is interested in only two i.e. previously it was Andrea, and now Horatio. The royal family concludes that the marriage between Balthazar and Bel-imperia is perfect to improve the harsh relation with Portugal. Marshall Hieronimo organizes a stage show for the Portuguese ambassador: Lorenzo the Duke suspects that Bel-imperia has found a new lover, to know more he bribes the servant of Bel-imperia and comes to know that he is Horatio. Lorenzo ties up with Balthazar who is under his custody and both plan to kill Horatio. They succeed in their plans Heironimo the father of Horatio and his wife find the body of their son Hanged and stabbed. Isabella, the mother of Horatio goes mad, and Hieronimo, also starts losing his wits. Now the devilish side of Lorenzo is revealed. He locks up Bel-imperia, but she succeeds to send a letter to Hieromino, written in her own blood, she informs him that Lorenzo and Balthazar are the murderers of Horatio Hieromino wants to see Bel-imperia; he presses hard at Lorenzo to let him meet Bel-imperia and finally succeeds. Lorenzo suspects that Hieromino knows something. From here on in the tragedy we have only deaths. Lorenzo suspects that Balthazar's servant Serbrine has betrayed the plot, so he convinces Pedringano to murder Serbrine, he accepts and finally murders Serbrine. Lorenzo like a witty criminal does not want to leave any mark behind, he tells police about the Murder of Serbrine and in this connection Pedringano is arrested. Pedringano is sentenced to Death. Pedringano hopes that Lorenzo will write a letter of pardon in his favour. Lorenzo writes a fake letter of pardon to make Pedringano believe that he is with him until the hangman comes and hangs Pedringano. Now the next step for Lorenzo is to prevent Hieronimo from seeking justice by convincing the King that Horatio is alive and well. Lorenzo also makes such arrangements that Hieronimo cannot see the King. In the mean time Hieronimo's wife Isabella commits suicide; this along with other critical situations pushes Hieronimo, out of limits. He loses sense and control and starts digging the ground with his dragger. Availing the opportunity Lorenzo tells the king that Hieronimo has turned mad because of his Jealousy towards his son Horatio's newfound wealth. Regaining his senses Hieronimo meets Bel-imperia and makes a plan to seek revenge. They make reconciliation with the murderers i.e. Balthazar and Lorenzo. They plan to put on a play together, *Soliman and Perseda*. In shade of the play they stab Lorenzo and Balthazar to death in front of the King, Viceroy, and Duke of Castile (Lorenzo and Bel-Imperia's father); Bel-imperia kills herself, and Hieronimo tells his audience of his motive behind the murders, but refuses to reveal Bel-Imperia's complicity in the plot. He then bites out his own tongue to prevent himself from talking under torture, after which he kills the Duke and then himself. Andrea and Revenge are satisfied, delivering suitable eternal punishments to the guilty parties.

IMPORTANT POINTS:

HIERONIMO, The father of Horatio stays till the end of the play, and seeks the revenge.

BEL-IMPERIA, is the only lead role female in the play. She is connected with all murders not that she commits but becomes one way or the other cause of murder

Three characters in the story are engaged with BEL-IMPERIA, ANDREA, BALTHAZAR AND HORATIO, all of them die.

ANDREA is the first character to die and becomes the Ghost.

The play staged by HIERONIMO and BEL-IMPERIA is *Soliman and Perseda*.
ANDREA is the first lover of Bel-imperia.

BALTHAZAR is the proposed suitor for Bel-imperia

LORENZO is the leading Villain in the play.

HIERONIMO and BEL-IMPERIA kill the murderers at the end of the play.

KEY FACTS

The Spanish Tragedy is the only work of Kyd that has survived.

The Spanish Tragedy is mostly influenced by Seneca.

Ben Jonson mentions "Hieronimo" in the Induction to his *Cynthia's Revels* (1600).

Thomas Dekker suggests that Jonson, in his early days as an actor, himself played Hieronimo.

The play also appears in Orhan Pamuk's novel *Snow*.

BY: TANVIR AHMED
M Phil English