Unit lV The jew of malta

play opens with a Prologue narrated by Machevill, a caricature of the author Machiavelli. This character explains that he is presenting the "tragedy of a Jew" who has become rich by following Machiavelli's teachings.

Act I opens with a Jewish merchant, called Barabas, waiting for news about the return of his ships from the east. He discovers that they have safely docked in Malta, before three Jews arrive to inform him that they must go to the senate-house to meet the governor. Once there, Barabas discovers that along with every other Jew on the island he must forfeit half of his estate to help the government pay tribute to the Turks. When the Barabas protests at this unfair treatment, the governor Ferneze confiscates all of Barabas's wealth and decides to turn Barabas's house into a convent. Barabas vows revenge but first attempts to recover some of the treasures he has hidden in his mansion. His daughter, Abigail, pretends to convert to Christianity in order to enter the convent. She smuggles out her father's gold at night.

Ferneze meets with Del Bosco, the Spanish Vice-Admiral, who wishes to sell Turkish slaves in the market place. Del Bosco convinces Ferneze to break his alliance with the Turks in return for Spanish protection. While viewing the slaves, Barabas meets up with Ferneze's, Lodowick. This man has heard of Abigail's great beauty from his friend (and Abigail's lover) Mathias. Barabas realizes that he can use Lodowick to exact revenge on Ferneze, and so he dupes the young man into thinking Abigail will marry him. While doing this, the merchant buys a slave called Ithamore who hates Christians as much as his new master does. Mathias sees Barabas talking to Lodowick and demands to know whether they are discussing Abigail. Barabas lies to Mathias, and so Barabas deludes both young men into thinking that Abigail has been promised to them. At home, Barabas orders his reluctant daughter to get betrothed to Lodowick. At the end of the second Act, the two young men vow revenge on each other for attempting to woo Abigail behind one another's backs. Barabas seizes on this opportunity and gets Ithamore to deliver a forged letter to Mathias, supposedly from Lodowick, challenging him to a duel.

Act III introduces the prostitute Bellamira and her pimp Pilia-Borza, who decide that they will steal some of Barabas's gold since business has been slack. Ithamore enters and instantly falls in love with Bellamira. Mathias and Lodowick kill each other in the duel orchestrated by Barabas and are found by Ferneze and Katherine, Mathias's mother. The bereaved parents vow revenge on the perpetrator of their sons' murders. Abigail finds Ithamore laughing, and Ithamore tells her of Barabas's role in the young men's deaths. Grief-stricken, Abigail persuades a Dominican friar Jacomo to let her enter the convent, even though she lied once before about converting. When Barabas finds out what Abigail has done, he is enraged, and he decides to poison some rice and send it to the nuns. He instructs Ithamore to deliver the food. In the next scene, Ferneze meets a Turkish emissary, and Ferneze explains that he will not pay the required tribute. The Turk leaves, stating that his leader Calymath will attack the island.

Jacomo and another friar Bernardine despair at the deaths of all the nuns, who have been poisoned by Barabas. Abigail enters, close to death, and confesses her father's role in Mathias's and Lodowick's deaths to Jacomo. She knows that the priest cannot make this knowledge public because it was revealed to him in confession.

Act IV shows Barabas and Ithamore delighting in the nuns' deaths. Bernardine and Jacomo enter with the intention of confronting Barabas. Barabas realizes that Abigail has confessed his crimes to Jacomo. In order to distract the two priests from their task, Barabas pretends that he wants to convert to Christianity and give all his money to whichever monastery he joins. Jacomo and Bernardine start fighting in order to get the Jew to join their own religious houses. Barabas hatches a plan and tricks Bernardine into coming home with him. Ithamore then strangles Bernardine, and Barabas frames Jacomo for the crime. The action switches to Bellamira and her pimp, who find Ithamore and persuade him to bribe Barabas. The slave confesses his master's crimes to Bellamira, who decides to report them to the governor after Barabas has given her his money. Barabas is maddened by the slave's treachery and turns up at Bellamira's home disguised as a French lute player. Barabas then poisons all three conspirators with the use of a poisoned flower.

The action moves quickly in the final act. Bellamira and Pilia-Borza confess Barabas's crimes to Ferneze, and the murderer is sent for along with Ithamore. Shortly after, Bellamira, Pilia-Borza and Ithamore die. Barabas fakes his own death and escapes to find Calymath. Barabas tells the Turkish leader how best to storm the town. Following this event and the capture of Malta by the Turkish forces, Barabas is made governor, and Calymath prepares to leave. However, fearing for his own life and the security of his office, Barabas sends for Ferneze. Barabas tells him that he will free Malta from Turkish rule and kill Calymath in exchange for a large amount of money. Ferneze agrees and Barabas invites Calymath to a feast at his home. However, when Calymath arrives, Ferneze prevents Barabas from killing him. Ferneze and Calymath watch as Barabas dies

###### **THE WHITE DEVIL**

###### **The White Devil, a tragedy in five acts, tells a story of adultery, corruption, murder, and revenge among the wealthy and privileged “great men” and women of the Italian nobility. Webster based The White Devil on the sensational murder of a young Italian noblewoman, Vittoria Accoramboni, in 1585. When first performed at the Red Bull Theater, The White Devil was not a success. Webster blamed both the cold weather and the audience of “ignorant asses” for the play’s failure. The White Devil later enjoyed great acclaim, and along with Webster’s The Duchess of Malfi, is regarded as a masterpiece. Considered a revenge play, The White Devil demonstrates many of the conventions of the genre, including a theme of vengeance, use of the supernatural, a dumb show, characters in disguise, madness, and many violent murders. In addition to its focus on retribution, The White Devil also explores themes of misogyny, double-standards, and the deceptive nature of appearances. The play opens as Count Lodovico, a murderous villain who has been banished from Rome for his crimes, talks to his two henchmen, Gasparo and Antonelli. Accepting Lodovico’s money, they promise to get his banishment revoked.**

###### **In the next scene, the Duke of Bracciano visits the home of the beautiful Vittoria Corombona and her husband, Camillo. Passionately in love with Vittoria, Bracciano plans to seduce her, even though both are separately married. Flamineo, Bracciano’s cynical, misogynistic secretary and Vittoria’s brother, offers to help the two get together, believing this will further his own career. He and his girlfriend, the Moorish ladies’ maid, Zanche, arrange for Bracciano and Vittoria to meet secretly. The two express their love for each other, and Vittoria shares a recent bad dream in which Camillo and Bracciano’s wife, Isabella, try to bury her alive. Bracciano vows to protect Vittoria by killing their inconvenient spouses. Vittoria’s mother, Cornelia, overhears their discussion, accuses them of adultery, and curses them. Isabella arrives with her brother, Francisco de Medici, and Cardinal Monticelso. Isabella asks her brother to be kind to Bracciano when the two men upbraid him about his infidelity. After Francisco and Monticelso depart, Bracciano tells Isabella he will never sleep with her again, essentially divorcing her. Flamineo and Bracciano plot to murder both Isabella and Camillo. Bracciano meets with a Conjurer who magically shows Bracciano the two murders as they happen. Before retiring for the evening, Isabella routinely kisses her portrait of Bracciano. This time, however, the unscrupulous Doctor Julio and his assistant have painted poison on the picture’s lips: Isabella kisses it and dies. Meanwhile, Camillo and Flamineo, out drinking with some companions, have a gymnastics competition. When Camillo and Flamineo are alone in the room, Flamineo breaks Camillo’s neck and arranges the body to look as though his death was a vaulting accident. Cardinal Monticelso and Francisco believe Vittoria killed her husband. Since they don’t have any hard evidence, they plan to get her convicted by assassinating her character. Monticelso acts as prosecutor and judge, defaming Vittoria and calling her a “whore.” Vittoria bravely defends herself, saying “Grant I was tempted, / Temptation to lust proves not the act.” Vittoria argues that they are condemning her because Bracciano loved her, which she compares to blaming a river for the death of someone who drowned themselves in it. Despite her logical arguments, Monticelso sentences her to prison in a convent for reformed prostitutes. Flamineo feigns insanity to avoid answering questions about his part in the murders. Now pardoned, Lodovico returns to Rome. He reveals that he loved Isabella and vows to avenge her death. Francisco plots his own revenge, writing an anonymous love letter to Vittoria with the intent of making Bracciano jealous. Francisco’s plan works: Bracciano angrily calls Vittoria a “whore.” Vittoria convinces him that she loves him, and he promises to break her out of prison. Bracciano, Vittoria, Flamineo, and Giovanni take advantage of the confusion in Rome and flee to Padua where they get married and hold court. Monticelso is named the next Pope and promptly excommunicates the lovers. Francisco hires Lodovico to kill them. In disguise and out for vengeance, Francisco, Lodovico, and Gasparo present themselves for work in Bracciano’s court. Francisco takes the identity of a Moor, calling himself Mulinassar. Lodovico and Gaspar pretend to be monks. Flamineo fights with his younger brother, Marcello, over his relationship with Zanche and stabs him to death. Before a staged fight, Lodovico puts poison on Bracciano’s helmet. As Bracciano dies, Lodovico and Gasparo reveal themselves and strangle him. Meanwhile, Zanche has transferred her affections to Mulinassar, unaware he’s really Francisco. She discloses the truth about Camillo and Isabella’s murders. At Lodovico’s urging, Francisco departs, leaving Lodovico to finish exacting their revenge. Giovanni takes over his father’s title, and as the new Duke, banishes Flamineo. Bracciano’s ghost appears to Flamineo, offering him a bowl filled with lilies and a skull. When the ghost throws dirt on him, Flamineo believes it is an omen of his death. Flamineo visits Vittoria and Zanche, announcing that he promised Bracciano he would kill Vittoria if Bracciano died. He convinces the two women to participate in a murder/suicide plot, first shooting him, then killing themselves. Vittoria and Zanche shoot Flamineo and rejoice in his death, disclosing that they never intended to go along with his scheme. Flamineo, however, stands up and reveals that the pistols were not loaded. Lodovico, Gasparo, and two of their henchmen, Carlo and Pedro, burst in and stab the three to death. Giovanni enters and captures the avengers. Lodovico admits to the slaughter, saying he was acting under Francisco’s orders and is content now that he has avenged Isabella. Giovanni sends Lodovico off to be tortured, concluding with a warning to evildoers: “Let guilty men remember their blacke deedes, / Do leane on crutches, made of slender reedes.”**