

DEAD MAN'S CHEST

A SWORD PLAY adapted by Dale Anthony Girard (©11/07)

(Based, in part, on dialogue from *The Changeling*, by Middleton and Rowley)

Two women, De Florio and Martinez, disguised as seamen, reveal to one another that they actually are women. As they begin to return to ship, Martinez stabs De Florio in the back. With De Florio wearing concealed armor, she is stabbed, but not wounded. The two ladies struggle and De Florio manages to draw her sword. The two engage and fight. As they fight, Martinez reveals that she fights with her father's sword and is avenging his death, whom De Florio killed. De Florio wounds Martinez. Martinez reveals that De Florio is her mother and De Florio kills Martinez.**

Characters (2 Women):

DE FLORIO

MARTINEZ

[MARTINEZ *undoes her doublet, revealing herself to DE FLORIO*]

DE FLORIO

Aye, I believe you. No more, no more. 'Tis strange, I thought I was alone as a lady on the sea. We are, indeed, sisters. Come -

[*DE FLORIO embraces MARTINEZ*]

MARTINEZ

(She's safely thrust upon me beyond hopes,) Now, to avoid suspicion, we must to ship. I'll not bow, beg or bear babes for those dogs. Do lead on, good De Florio, I'll follow thee.

DE FLORIO

Aye, I am upon't

[*DE FLORIO turns to exit.*]

MARTINEZ

And so am I.

[*MARTINEZ springs on DE FLORIO with murderous intent, stabbing her in the back.*]

DE FLORIO

Treason! Murder, murder!

MARTINEZ

Cry your heart and bellow to the heavens, you whore. 'Tis in vain. Your voice twill echo to the caverns of hell, none can hear us here.

DE FLORIO

O, bloody stumpet!

[*DE FLORIO suddenly rises and rushes MARTINEZ, striking her and knocking her back. The two struggle and DE FLORIO draws her sword*]

MARTINEZ

A vain attempt my dear; what little fight thou mayest have left twill flow from you like the crimson flood that shall issue from my most gracious wound. You are dead already.

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DE FLORIO

I fear you are doubly deceived; dead I am not. Nor shall I die from your thrust most treacherous – for my corset 'tis more than thou perceived.

MARTINEZ

Armour? Thou art clad in mail? 'Sblood! Then all is lost.

DE FLORIO

Nay – all's not lost. A ghost shall still be made here – but twill be yours!

[DE FLORIO charges MARTINEZ, they fight]

DE FLORIO

You fight with fervor and passion; whore. Prithee, whose malice hast thou put on?

MARTINEZ

Tis mine own. I fight for that which I love – recognize you not this sword?

DE FLORIO

Nay, 'tis but a contemptible Spanish blade. I know it not.

MARTINEZ

Twas my father's sword, whore. It is no bastard metal, and has an edge twill ring you a peal like bells at great men's funerals. Keep your eye on it, bitch; take special notice of the crest upon the hilt. Know you not this sword?

DE FLORIO

Aye, 'tis old Camillio's sword. Od's life – you must be his daughter, Venessa. How tragic. Tis twice now that sword couns't pierce my corset. How sad that you are not as fortunately attired.

[DE FLORIO lunges at MARTINEZ, they fight, MARTINEZ is wounded]

MARTINEZ

How now – I'm hit!

DE FLORIO

Hit, hurt, dying – dead! Wenst thou gets to hell, give thy father my warmest regards. We were close once.

MARTINEZ

I know, whore – you are my mother!

*[MARTINEZ lunges at DE FLORIO, they fight.** MARTINEZ is wounded – she dies]*

DE FLORIO

So here's an undertaking well accomplished. Ha! A rival, and past baggage, laid to rest. They say, "dead men tell no tales," aye, but there's news in this dead man's chest.

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**ALTRNATE ENDING

Two women, De Florio and Martinez, disguised as seamen, reveal to one another that they actually are women. As they begin to return to ship, Martinez stabs De Florio in the back. With De Florio wearing concealed armor, she is stabbed, but not wounded. The two ladies struggle and De Florio manages to draw her sword. The two engage and fight. As they fight, Martinez reveals that she fights with her father's sword and is avenging his death, whom De Florio killed. De Florio wounds Martinez. Martinez reveals that De Florio is her mother and then kills her, avenging her father's death.

*[MARTINEZ lunges at DE FLORIO, they fight. DE FLORIO is seriously wounded.
MARTINEZ puts her on point.]*

DE FLORIO

Ah! You wouldn't kill yer own mother now; would ya?

MARTINEZ

Tit for tat, mummy!

[MARTINEZ runs DE FLORIO through – she dies]

MARTINEZ

Tit for tat! And so, Mummy, here's an undertaking finally accomplished. Ha! I don't know what Papa saw in you –or you in him for that matter. Oh well, they say, "dead men tell no tales," aye, but there's news in this dead man's chest.