

The Duchess of Malfi Characters

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Major Characters

The Duchess of Malfi: She is a young widow and ruler of the Italian town of Malfi (also known as Amalfi). She is kind, wise, brave, and virtuous. Her brothers try to control her life. But she marries Antonio in secret. She stays strong even when she is arrested and killed.

Duke Ferdinand: He is the Duchess's twin brother. He is proud, angry, and cruel. He does not want his sister to marry again. He hires Bosola to spy on her. His guilt drives him insane (lycanthropy).

The Cardinal: He is the Duchess's other brother. He is a churchman but acts very badly. He hides his evil with a calm face. He has a secret lover, kills her, and later is killed by Bosola.

Antonio Bologna: He is the Duchess's steward. He is honest, kind, and loyal. The Duchess secretly marries him. He runs away to protect their son. Later, Bosola kills him by mistake.

Daneil de Bosola: He is a spy and a soldier. Ferdinand hires him to watch the Duchess. At first, he obeys the brothers. Later, he feels guilty and tries to fix his mistakes. He kills the Cardinal and Ferdinand, but dies in the end.

Delio: He is Antonio's good friend. He knows about the secret marriage. He helps Antonio and later protects Antonio's only surviving son.

Julia: She is the Cardinal's lover and the wife of Castruccio. She flirts with other men and falls for Bosola. Later, the Cardinal kills her with a poisoned Bible.

Cariola: She is the Duchess's maid. She knows about the secret marriage. She stays loyal and brave. She is killed with the Duchess.

Minor Characters

Castruccio: He is an old nobleman. He is married to Julia, but she cheats on him.

Marquis of Pescara: He is an honorable soldier and courtier. He is honest and has a strong sense of honor.

Count Malateste: He is a courtier and friend of Ferdinand.

Silvio: He is a courtier who works at Amalfi. He supports Duke Ferdinand.

Old Lady: She is a midwife. She appears in scenes with Bosola.

Roderigo: He is a courtier who serves under Duke Ferdinand.

Grisolan: He is another courtier who serves Duke Ferdinand.

Doctor: He checks on Ferdinand and says he has lycanthropy (a mental illness).

Madmen: They are insane people sent by Ferdinand to scare the Duchess. But she stays calm and even feels less lonely because of them.

Executioners: They work for Ferdinand. They strangle the Duchess, her maid, and her children.

Pilgrims: They watch during the Duchess and Antonio's banishment. They talk about the cruelty they see.

Servants: Various household staff. Several servants appear in the play. Some are loyal, and some die during the events.

Children: The Duchess and Antonio have three children. The two younger ones are killed. The oldest survives under Delio's care.