



The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays

John Webster

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This volume offers John Webster's two great Jacobean tragedies, *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, together with his brilliant tragicomedy, *The Devil's Law-Case*, and the comedy written with William Rowley, *A Cure for a Cuckold*. Webster is a radically and creatively experimental dramatist. His tragedies deploy shifting dramatic perspectives which counteract and challenge conventional moral judgements, while the predominantly gentler tone of his comedies and tragicomedies responds inventively to contemporary changes in dramatic taste and fashion. All four plays display the provocative intelligence of a profoundly original playwright. Under the General Editorship of Michael Cordner of the University of York, the texts of the plays have been newly edited and are presented with modernized spelling and punctuation. In addition, there is detailed annotation, a glossary, and a critical introduction which traces Webster's artistic development, defends him against charges of over-indulgence in violence, and explores his sophisticated staging and scenic forms.

The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays Details

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From Reader Review The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays for online ebook

Benjamin says

What the hell? "Read this", I was told. "It's a lovely story!" I was told.

Tammy says

This play is so depressing! I didn't imagine that it would be that bloody and violent. I highly recommend it because Webster uses the Senecan tragedy. I have never heard about it before until now.

Information about the Senecan tragedy:

"The plays of Seneca exercised great influence on medieval playwrights, who used them as models for literary imitation. They were edited by Nicholas Trivet, and in the 15th and 16th cents there was a considerable vogue in Italy for Senecan tragedy. The plays of Giraldi (1504–73)—notably his *Orbecche* (1541)—and of Ludovico Dolce (1508–68) were particularly famous. The same movement in France had its effect on Buchanan's Latin plays and on the plays of Jodelle and Garnier, and both the Italian and the French fashion influenced English drama in the 16th cent.

The characteristics of the Senecan tragedy were: 1. a division into five acts with Choruses—and in the English imitations often a dumb show expressive of the action; 2. a considerable retailing of 'horrors' and violence, usually, though not always, acted off the stage and elaborately recounted; 3. a parallel violence of language and expression. *Gorboduc* is a good example of a Senecan tragedy in English. The fashion, which developed in learned rather than popular circles, was short-lived, and was displaced by a more vital and native form of tragedy. But its elements persisted in Elizabethan drama and may be traced in such plays as *Tamburlaine the Great* and *Titus Andronicus*."

Elizabeth Mock says

Not one of my favorites. Though, I do have to say any play with incest and lycanthrope from the 1600s does make for an entertaining, if not disturbing, read.

Peter says

"Fortune's a right whore"

Tim says

Prefigurement of the tragic bleakness of Cormac McCarthy. That is all.

Sarah says

I rather enjoyed this play. Gothic and romance and revenge all in one

Lisa says

Hard work, only read it because it is a requirement of my next OU module for my BA. Obviously of its time. Predictable. Although I didn't know the story, as it was a tragedy and she was going against the men in her family the ending was inevitable.

Willow says

My favorite female character of Jacobean Revenge Tragedy! She is a stoic, beautiful woman who actually existed in history. I think John Webster's drama is incredibly feminist despite the era in which he was writing. I would love to see this performed.

Phillip says

For me, The Duchess of Malfi is the greatest of the Jacobean tragicomedies. Some of the other plays are not quite at that same level. But Duchess easily rivals any other play in its genre.

Daniel says

White Devil - 3.5
Duchess of Malfi - 4.5
Devil's Law Case - 3
Cure for a Cuckold - 4

Ayne Ray says

Webster, a contemporary of Shakespeare, was an expert writer on the darker side of human nature, and his plays are often harrowing and disconcerting. ("The Duchess of Malfi" is his masterpiece; beginning as a love story, it ends as a horrible tragedy of revenge and destruction.) Interestingly, and strangely, enough, he was an adept comedic writer as well.

Lois Haight says

Duchess of Malfi: romance, murder, lycanthropy... my kind of play. Could possibly be retitled, "The Tragedy of Bosola, the Misled Man"

Diana says

Honestly, I don't remember many specifics about this play, apart from the fact that it doesn't end well...ha ha, bad joke. But I have very fond memories of sitting around the table of the Kensington flat, reading it aloud. I read the lines of the Duchess, and I found her to be an interesting character, despite the fact that I cannot now recall the reasons why.

Ahmed says

The duchess of Malfi is the best play in this collection. A world of corruption, a world where everyone seeks power over his beloved's comfort and ease. I really like it.

Mei says

yummy melodrama.
