



The Duchess of Malfi

Film script by Alice de Sousa

(Inspired by John Webster's stage play of the same title)

Log Line:

'When life is forged through death and love is impossible, the animal within will out.'

Following the death of the media mogul the *Duke of Malfi*, his daughter *the Duchess of Malfi* solely inherits the family's considerable fortune to the dismay of her two brothers. The eldest, *the Cardinal*, who has all his life presumed himself to be the natural heir, is resolute in his intention to secure personal control over the Malfi Empire. *Ferdinand the Duchess's* incestuously obsessed twin brother, whose birth cost their mother her life, is determined to retain control and absolute possession of his sister. The success of the brother's sinister power games depend on *the Duchess* remaining unmarried.

Meanwhile *Bosola*, who has been unjustly imprisoned for a crime which *the Cardinal* committed, returns to unceremoniously demand his dues. He is drawn into serving the brothers, with promises of great rewards, and ordered to spy on *the Duchess*.

Secretly, *the Duchess* has wed *Antonio*; who her father employed before his death to provide constant film footage of his children and their future management of the family's Empire to a secret Council.

The marriage between *the Duchess* and *Antonio* is successfully concealed, until the feared and resourceful *Bosola* secures proof that *the Duchess* has had a child. This provokes a shocking reaction from *Ferdinand* and Machiavellian plotting from *the Cardinal*. *Ferdinand* violently confronts *the Duchess* in her bedroom and threatens to kill her lover and child. Fearful but convinced that her brothers will never harm her, *the Duchess* sends *Antonio* with their child into hiding.

Meanwhile, *the Cardinal* orders *Bosola* to imprison *the Duchess*, psychologically torture and finally to kill her. Throughout her imprisonment *Ferdinand's* emotional turmoil and grasp on reality violently weakens and this provides *the Cardinal* with the much desired opportunity to have *Ferdinand* permanently detained in a gruesome asylum.

Following the murder of *the Duchess*, *Bosola* becomes conscience stricken. The prolonged contact with the heroine, the revealing discussions which they shared, and the dignity and courage with which she faced her death deeply affect him. He begins to question his life, his actions, and the wisdom of continuing to serve the corrupt and unscrupulous Malfi brothers.

Simultaneously, the visually thrilling, design driven, opulent and timeless Malfi world begins to unravel...

The plot resolves itself with a shocking blood bath as the remaining characters, with unrestrained animalistic fury, turn on each other to avenge suffered wrongs; and with a cinematically thrilling and all consuming fire.

The film concludes, as intriguingly as it commenced, with the audience wondering whether the recently repentant *Bosola* will continue his lonely journey into the unknown with only guilt and tortured thoughts for company; or whether, he will carry out the Malfi brother's orders and kill *the Duchess'* and *Antonio's* child.

· **For further information contact: GALLEON FILMS LTD.**
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A full script is available on request.