



## Pedagogical Pathways: *The Duchess of Malfi*

### Sibling Relationships

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## Objectives

Before, while, and after reading *The Duchess of Malfi*, these activities can help learners to:

- understand the conflict between Duchess of Malfi and her brothers.
- analyze language in order to identify the needs and desires of each character.
- reflect on the relationships between siblings.

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## Guiding Questions

1. What do you get along with your siblings?
2. What are the reasons for the conflicts among the Aragon siblings?
3. How is this evidenced in the text?

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## Materials

- Writing surface for a sibling profile
- Worksheet for conflict structure
- Textual evidence worksheet

## Activities

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### Pre-reading: Siblings

*Do you have a sister or a brother? How do you get along with her or him? Talk about your relationship with your siblings. (If you don't have any siblings, you can talk about any sibling relationships that you know in movies, novels, your neighborhood, even your parents, etc.)*

- 1) Fill out the below profile about your sibling and introduce him or her to your classmates.

Draw a portrait of your sibling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Name:</li><li>● Hobby:</li><li>● Favorite food:</li><li>● Favorite song:</li><li>● Favorite person:</li><li>● What makes him/her special?</li></ul>
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- 2) How do you get along with each other? Please identify your relationship with him or her on the following scale by circling the answer that applies.

**He (She) is my best friend.**

**Almost never**

**Seldom**

**Sometimes**

**Often**

**Almost always**

- 3) Here are some common reasons for sibling rivalry. What is usually the reason for conflicts between you and your siblings, if any?

Position in the family

Conflicting needs

Gender

Individual temperament

Jealousy and competition

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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**While reading: Conflicts**

*Read the interactions between Ferdinand and the Cardinal in Act II Scene v and between Ferdinand and Duchess of Malfi in Act III Scene ii and discuss the following issues:*

- 1) What do you think are the reasons for the conflicts among the Aragon siblings? Discuss in groups and write down the reasons.

Examples: Personalities, social status, desire for fortune, jealousy

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- 2) Match each person with his or her needs.

Cardinal

Love and Marriage

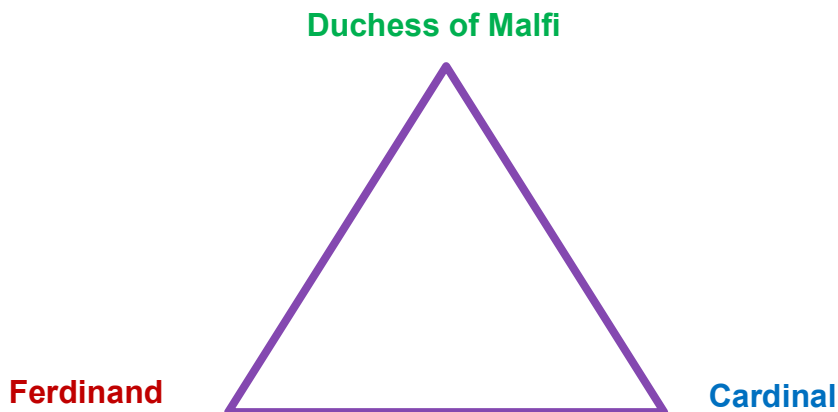
Ferdinand

Power and Honor

Duchess of Malfi

Money and Family reputation

- 3) How can you describe the conflicts among Aragon siblings using the below triangle? Identify the structure of the conflict. Who is opponent of whom? For what?



- 4) Regarding the answers for tasks 1 and 2, find the textual evidence for your responses. Read the text again and list the lines and phrases for your responses. Two examples of such textual evidence are below:

**Cardinal.** Is't possible?/ Can this be certain?

**Ferdinand.** Rhubarb, O, for rhubarb/ To purge this choler! Here/s the cursed day/ To prompt my memory; and here 't shall stick/ Till of her bleeding heart I make a sponge / To wipe it out.

**Cardinal.** Why do you make yourself / So wild a tempest?

**Ferdinand.** Would I could be one, / That I might toss her palace'bout her ears, /Root up her goodly forests, blast here meads, /And lay her general territory as waste/ As she hath done her honors.

(Act II Scene v)

**Duchess.** I pray, sir, hear me; I am married.

**Ferdinand.** So!

**Duchess.** Happily, not to your liking; but for that, / Alas, your shears do come untimely now/ To clip the bird's wing that's already flown!/ Will you see my husband?

**Ferdinand.** Yes. If I could change /Eyes with a basilisk.

(Act III Scene ii)

## Post-reading: Rewrite and Act Out

*In groups, complete the following tasks based on what you have discussed.*

- 1) Choose and rewrite one of the interactions among the Aragon siblings into desirable ones.

A large, empty rectangular box with a light pink background and a dark red border. The box is designed for students to write their rewritten interactions. It has rounded corners and a small circular icon in the top-left and bottom-left corners, suggesting it might be a scroll or a page from a notebook.

- 2) Act out the scene you just created in groups. Record it as an audio file or a video file and share it with the class.