

Name: George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham

Date of Birth: 8/28/1592

Date of Death: 8/23/1628, of stabbing

Age at time of story: Theoretically, 36 (if the novel takes place in 1627)

Parents: George Villiers and Mary Beaumont

Spouse: Lady Katherine Manners, 1620

- Originally Lady Katherine's father did not consent, so Buckingham devised a scheme:
- "In March 1620 Mary visited the Countess of Rutland in the absence of the Earl, and invited Katherine to dine with her, promising to bring her back home before night-fall. It has been commonly assumed that the invitation was to Mary's Leicestershire home at nearby Goadby Marwood. However, Mary brought the innocent girl to her lodgings at the Gatehouse in Whitehall. Even worse, Katherine stayed overnight, and so did her suitor, despite the fact that his own lodgings were within walking distance. The next day Katherine was returned home, but her outraged and furious father refused to receive her at Belvoir. The fact that Buckingham had also slept under the same roof ensured that Katherine's reputation was ruined. Rutland was now forced into the position of insisting that Buckingham marry his daughter to save both her and the family's honour."
- They were (mostly) happily married, though Katherine faulted him for "loving women too much" (i.e. adultery)

Children: George and Frances (died young)

Religion: Protestant

Life:

- As a child, he was poor for a nobleman, but still learned fencing, music, and other skills required of a courtier (however, he was relatively illiterate)
 - "I shall make you wonder at a resolution I have taken never to inquire more after your health ; you can bare me wittnes, that I have never given credit to those that undertake to have the felosifers stone..."-- in a letter to a close friend
- He stayed in France, likely seeing the crowning of Louis XIII, before returning at the age of 21
- He entered life at court through the title of "Cup-bearer", which was purchased for him by a wealthier courtier (Villiers was quite poor and relied on benefactors during his early years in James' court)



- Villiers quickly rose through court to become James' favorite, being named Master of the Horse and getting the nickname "Steenie" from the King, short for St. Stephen, because of his "angelic face"
 - James and George were rumored to be lovers and James wrote very lovingly of George in his letters
- Villiers was bestowed the estate of Howick Hall, which brought him in 80,000 pounds a year
- He climbed the ranks due to the favor of the king from being just a gentleman to a Duke with his own estate and an additional income of 15,000 a year
- He ended up reforming much of the interior workings of the monarchy, which earned him praise
 - " The Household, the Treasury, the Wardrobe, and the Admiralty had been subjected to sweeping and beneficial reforms. Everywhere retrenchment had been carried out under the influence and with the co-operation of Buckingham."-- Gardiner (historian)
- Through the period of the play he was in good standing with both James I and Charles I, but he was disastrous at foreign policy and ended up making enemies
- He was assassinated by a disgruntled naval officer

Personality:

- Was charming, early on in his court career
 - He had good manners, which caused people to elevate him socially
- Had a short temper, particularly when he felt he had been wronged
 - When a servant of the King's first favorite spilled soup in his lap, he rose up and clouted the man on the ear without a second thought, even though it could have gotten his hand chopped off
- Was superstitious
 - Refused to take the estates owned by the King's former favorite, for fear of bad luck
- Wanted adoration, not money
 - "Buckingham was generally pleased to favour his friends without any other recognition than their adulation, or consented at most to receive presents not large enough, considering his own fortune now, to be called bribes.
- He enjoyed being generous to people who wanted to curry his favor
- Cared about his family; secured good court positions for them as much as possible
- Liked gemstones
- His biggest fault, according to biographers, was his vanity