A gentlewoman and maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth

A notorious London prostitute called Lucy Negro, Black Lucy, or Lucy Morgan

A clandestine Jew and illegitimate daughter of the Italian-born court musician, Baptista Bassano, one of a group of Jewish musicians brought from Venice by Henry VIII

Mary Ffitch, a notorious London pickpocket and crossdresser, was the subject of several early modern works. She performed onstage once in the 1611 play The Roaring Girl.

In the early modern period, crossdressing was frequently associated with prostitution, fornication, or other forms of illicit activities.

Legal proceeding records of the time contain numerous cases where women and their helpers were punished for dressing up as a man—no matter illicit sexual activities were involved or not.

In the top 10 biggest roles in Shakespeare’s plays.

Hamlet in Hamlet

Rosalind in As You Like It

Cleopatra in Antony and Cleopatra

Portia in The Merchant of Venice

Isabella in Measure for Measure

Mary, a female page role was when a male actor played a woman who was playing a man (a special challenge to both the actors’ ability to perform as well as to the audience’s imagination prior to 1660).