

# Volpone Revised Edition New Mermaids: A Masterpiece of Jacobean Comedy

In the bustling and vibrant world of Jacobean England, where satire and social commentary flourished, Ben Jonson emerged as a literary giant with his masterpiece, *Volpone*. First performed in 1605, this enduring comedy has captivated audiences for centuries with its biting wit, unforgettable characters, and timeless exploration of greed, deception, and the human condition.

## The Revised Edition: A Modern Interpretation

The Revised Edition of *Volpone* from the acclaimed New Mermaids series offers a fresh and accessible interpretation of Jonson's classic play. Edited by renowned scholar David Bevington, this edition provides a comprehensive to the play, its historical context, and its enduring significance.



### Volpone: Revised Edition (New Mermaids) by Ben Jonson

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 2797 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 214 pages
Hardcover	: 416 pages
Item Weight	: 3.04 pounds
Dimensions	: 6.65 x 1.69 x 9.49 inches

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Bevington's insightful commentary sheds light on the play's complex characters, intricate plot, and abundant literary devices. With extensive annotations, a glossary, and a detailed textual apparatus, this edition empowers readers of all levels to fully appreciate the nuances and depth of Jonson's work.

## **A Plot of Deception and Greed**

*Volpone* revolves around the titular character, a wealthy and unscrupulous Venetian nobleman, who feigns illness to attract greedy individuals seeking to inherit his vast fortune. With the help of his cunning servant, Mosca, Volpone sets up an elaborate scheme to fleece his potential heirs, including the miserly Corvino, the senile Corbaccio, and the vain Lady Would-be.

As the plot unfolds, Jonson masterfully exposes the folly of human greed and the lengths to which individuals will go to satisfy their desires. The characters become entangled in a web of deception, where their own vices ultimately lead to their downfall.

## **Unforgettable Characters**

One of the enduring strengths of *Volpone* lies in its unforgettable cast of characters. Volpone himself is a charismatic and cunning anti-hero, a master manipulator who toys with his victims with ruthless efficiency. Mosca, his loyal and resourceful servant, is a brilliant schemer who often outwits his master.

The play also features a host of supporting characters who contribute to the richness and complexity of the plot. Corvino, the miserly merchant, is driven by an insatiable greed that blinds him to the deception around him.

Corbaccio, the senile lawyer, is easily manipulated by Volpone's promises of wealth and immortality.

Lady Would-be, a vain and pretentious woman, is desperate to appear fashionable and cultured, even if it means associating with a corrupt figure like Volpone. Each character, with their unique motivations and flaws, adds to the play's vibrant tapestry of human nature.

## **Enduring Themes**

Beyond its entertaining plot and memorable characters, *Volpone* explores profound and enduring themes that resonate with audiences across generations. The play satirizes the insatiable greed that corrupts individuals and undermines society. It exposes the folly of deception and the consequences of betraying trust.

Jonson also delves into the darker aspects of human nature, questioning the morality of those who seek to exploit others for personal gain. The play raises questions about the nature of justice and the boundaries between right and wrong.

## **A Masterpiece of Jacobean Comedy**

With its intricate plot, memorable characters, and timeless themes, *Volpone* stands as a masterpiece of Jacobean comedy. Ben Jonson's sharp wit and incisive social commentary remain as relevant today as they were over four centuries ago.

The Revised Edition from the New Mermaids series offers a comprehensive and accessible interpretation of this classic play, making it an essential read for students, scholars, and theater enthusiasts alike.

Whether you are a seasoned fan of Jacobean comedy or a newcomer to the genre, *Volpone* promises an unforgettable and thought-provoking theatrical experience.

## Additional Resources

- Folger Shakespeare Library: *Volpone*
- Royal Shakespeare Company: *Volpone*
- Encyclopædia Britannica: *Volpone*



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