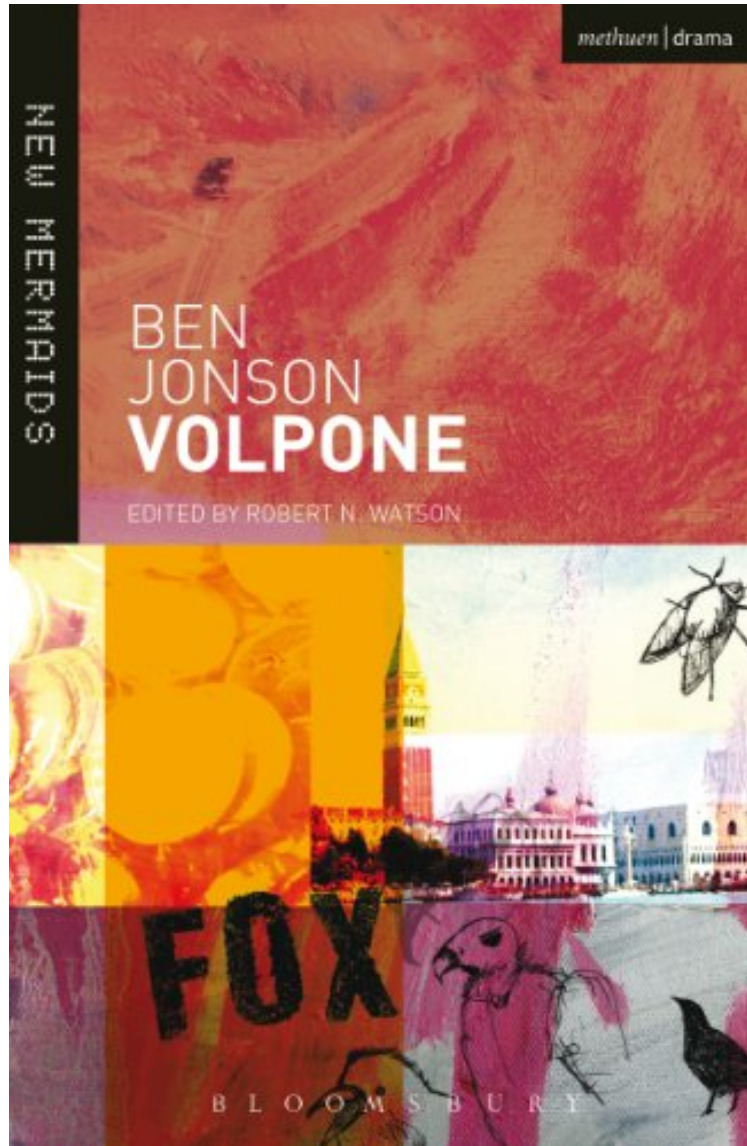


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Volpone (New Mermaids)

Ben Jonson

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Ben Jonson : Volpone (New Mermaids) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Volpone (New Mermaids):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. John Dryden famously said that he admired Jonson while he loved Shakespeare. ButBy Andrew Louis BlackIn what can only be seen as a back-handed compliment, John Dryden famously said that he admired Jonson while he loved Shakespeare. But, man, is there a lot to admire. Taking the challenge of Aristotle's unities to its fullest extent, Jonson's *ALCHEMIST* is a masterpiece of comic invention and timing. It starts in the middle of an argument and watches that argument get resolved inadequately but weirdly

perfectly. VOLPONE is a comedy of deceit and control, driven by desire. This is a good collection, fairly inexpensive, with a good overview, though as with all Oxford and Penguin editions I wish they would change their usage of endnotes, and these plays exigently show why: you're constantly having to turn to the back in order to see what things means, and students are seeing these as plays of record rather than records of performance. Critical and Scholarly editions put the footnotes where they're easily available; I wish more accessible editions like this would follow suit.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Each version and edition reveals new facetsBy Bernie (xyzzzy)I came upon this play and Ben Jonson by the back door. I was watching a movie titled "The Honey Pot" with Rex Harrison. His character Cecil Fox after observing this play used the outline for his own purposes. So naturally I have to read the play to see what the movie is mimicking.I have several copies of "Valpone" (the fox) to compare information on Ben. This is a review of the "New Mermaids Series" I have several of their series. They give you all the background information and any annotation needed. They make the information interesting enough that you feel that Ben Jonson is in the room with you. I am sure some people would not want to be in the same room. I was surprised to find that William Shakespeare acted in some of Ben's plays.The play is well written and has many levels to it. If it did not have so many footnotes I would be in trouble. It reads like an English play yet has parts that would make Stephen King blush.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Flies will get us all in the end...By Merilahti KristiinaAs some others, I got introduced to this play via "Honey pot", the movie, where Rex Harrison is staging a similar plot. I enjoyed the movie and for years wanted to read the play. Unfortunately, it is not translated in Finnish and not included in our literary studies. Finally I bought this edition and read it last Summer.I must say the language took some effort at first. But when I got used to the old English, I enjoyed the play immensely. The plot twists and turns, people's greed makes them silly when they think they are cunning, and in the end justice is served - to some extent. People do not change or get much wiser as centuries pass on, do they...? Deserves to be read, definately, and - hopefully - translated for us Finns, too, by someone much better than me.

Volpone's reverential prayer to his heaps of gold launches the sharpest, funniest play about money and morals in the 17th century - a play still wickedly relevant on the same topics four centuries later. Ben Jonson's comedy depicts selfishness thinly veiled by sanctimonious speeches, lust and possessiveness poorly disguised as love and marriage, and cynical legalism passing itself off as pure justice, alongside snobbery, class warfare and greed. The wily protagonists keep a dozen conventional plots spinning in the minds of their dupes, and when their amazing juggling act finally unravels, there are yet more twists - and an even deeper cynicisim - to the story. The play is partly a beast-fable: the wily fox, Volpone, plays dead to lure flesh-eating birds that he can then consume. But the beasts are the human race, and polite society the biggest, greediest scam of them all.This student edition contains a lengthy Introduction with background on the author, date and sources, critical interpretation and stage history.Robert N. Watson is Distinguished Professor of English at UCLA. His publications include Critical Essays on Ben Jonson (as editor) and Ben Jonson's Parodic Strategy. He also edited the New Mermaids edition of Every Man in His Humour.

...a solid and useful book. Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England