



كلية: الآداب

القسم او الفرع: قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

المرحلة: الثالثة

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اسم المادة باللغة العربية: المسرحية

اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية: **Drama**

اسم المحاضرة الأولى باللغة العربية: نظرة عامة عن مسرحية فولبون

اسم المحاضرة الأولى باللغة الإنكليزية: **Overview of Volpone**

## Overview of *Volpone*

*Volpone*, written by English playwright Ben Jonson in 1606, is a satirical Jacobean comedy that unfolds in 17th-century Venice. The play follows the wealthy Volpone as he feigns illness in order to trick his greedy acquaintances into giving him gifts. The play is a satire of greed and corruption, and it explores themes of deception, social climbing, and the power of money. *Volpone* is one of Jonson's most famous plays and is still performed today.

### **Summary: Dedication, Argument, & Prologue**

The play is dedicated to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, both of which had recently awarded Jonson honorary doctorates at the time of the play's writing. He briefly discusses the moral intentions of the play and its debt to classical drama. In the Argument, Jonson provides a brief summary of the play's plot in the form of an acrostic on Volpone's name. The prologue then introduces the play to the viewing audience, informing them that "with a little luck," it will be a hit; Jonson ends by promising that the audience's cheeks will turn red from laughter after viewing his work.

### **Analysis: Dedication, Argument, & Prologue**

These opening parts of the play, before we are introduced to the action, may seem superfluous. But they help us understand the play in several ways. First, in the banal sense; the Argument, as Jonson terms it, provides in brief encapsulated form the premise of the play, a premise that will be fully introduced in the first scene.

The Dedication, however, gives us a clue as to Jonson's intentions in writing *Volpone*. First of all, he is intent on writing a "moral" play. By taking to task those "poetasters" (his derogatory term for an inferior playwright) who have disgraced the theatrical profession with their immoral work, Jonson highlights the moral intentions of his play. His play will make a moral statement. And it will do so in line with the traditions of drama followed by classical dramatists, that is, the dramatists of ancient Greece. This connection to the past further indicates that the play we are about to read (or see) is a work of serious intellectual and moral weight.

But, in the Prologue, we see a different side of Jonson. This side of Jonson is boastful—this play was written in five weeks, says Jonson, all the jokes are mine, I think it's going to be a huge hit, and you are all going to laugh hysterically until your cheeks turn red. The Prologue sets a boisterous tone that the rest of the play will follow. So in these opening passages, Jonson begins to mix a serious intellectual and moral message with a boisterous, light-hearted and entertaining tone, reinforcing the explicit promise he makes in the Prologue "to mix profit with your pleasure." In other words, says Jonson, *Volpone* will be a work that will educate you but also entertain you at the same time.