



## Volpone

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### Places Discussed

Volpone's house (vohl-POH-nay). Home of the Venetian magnifico, whose name means "fox." With an outer gallery or waiting room for dupes and a dazzling treasure cache, piles of gold, plate, and jewels hidden behind the rear-stage curtain, Volpone's house is a handy location for storing the rich gifts of solicitous visitors. When guests are present, the drawn curtains hide this shrine to wealth, and the foxlike Volpone stretches out on his sickbed in gown, furs, and nightcap, as his servant, Mosca, ushers in the assorted base creatures.

Hiding places are important to this set, for Bonario must observe Volpone's revelation of ardent passion unseen, just as Voltore must overhear Mosca and Corbaccio. Curtains close around Volpone on his couch as Mosca at a desk inventories the supposed inheritance of hopefuls.

Corvino's house (kohr-VEE-noh). Home of a Venetian merchant, near St. Mark's Place. The location attracts pickpockets, con artists, and schemers of every stripe. Corvino's wife Cecelia looks down from a balcony, which opens into a room in Corvino's house where he chides her. In front of the house, Mosca and a servant erect a stage for a medicine vendor to display his wares, and a disguised Volpone mounts the platform and haggles over high-priced quackery.

### Bibliography:

Barish, Jonas A. "The Double Plot in *Volpone*." In *Ben Jonson: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Jonas A. Barish. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963. Analyzes the play's structure to defend the relevance of the subplot concerning Sir Politic and Lady Politic Would-Be, which he sees as a caricature of the main plot.

Cave, Richard Allen. *Ben Jonson*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991. Devotes a chapter of analysis to the play's plot, themes, and characters. Includes some discussion of the play's production history.

Dessen, Alan C. *Jonson's Moral Comedy*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971. Dessen devotes one chapter to a discussion of *Volpone*, which he sees as pivotal, marking a shift in Jonson's perceptions away from the influences of the old morality plays such as *Everyman* and toward a satiric comedy that examines the moral implications of human failings.

Miles, Rosalind. *Ben Jonson: His Craft and Art*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1990. Discusses *Volpone* with particular attention to the techniques of Jonson's satire, noting that nothing is exempt from his dark vision of human beings as jungle animals, quick to prey on one another.

Summers, Claude J., and Ted-Larry Pebworth. *Ben Jonson*. Boston: Twayne, 1979. A general introduction to Jonson and his work. Includes a discussion of *Volpone* that concentrates on the play's satiric themes and structure.

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