

# **The Alchemist**

Ben Jonson

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## The Alchemist

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Benjamin Jonson (1572-1637) was a Renaissance dramatist, poet and actor, known best for his satirical plays and lyric poems. He had a knack for absurdity and hypocrisy, a trait that made him immensely popular in the 17th century Renaissance period. However, his reputation diminished somewhat in the Romantic era, when he began to be unfairly compared to Shakespeare. The Theatre in London had had been denied to "The Admiral's Men" in 1597, but the troupe regained control of it sometime between 1608 and 1610 and "The Alchemist" was among the first plays chosen to be performed there. The comedy transported a classical drama into contemporary London, resulting in a fully modernized depiction of human folly, vice and foolishness. The Alchemist is generally considered one of Jonson's most vivid and characteristic works, and was recognized by Samuel Taylor Coleridge as one of the three most perfect plots in literature. It remains one of Jonson's most revived plays.



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