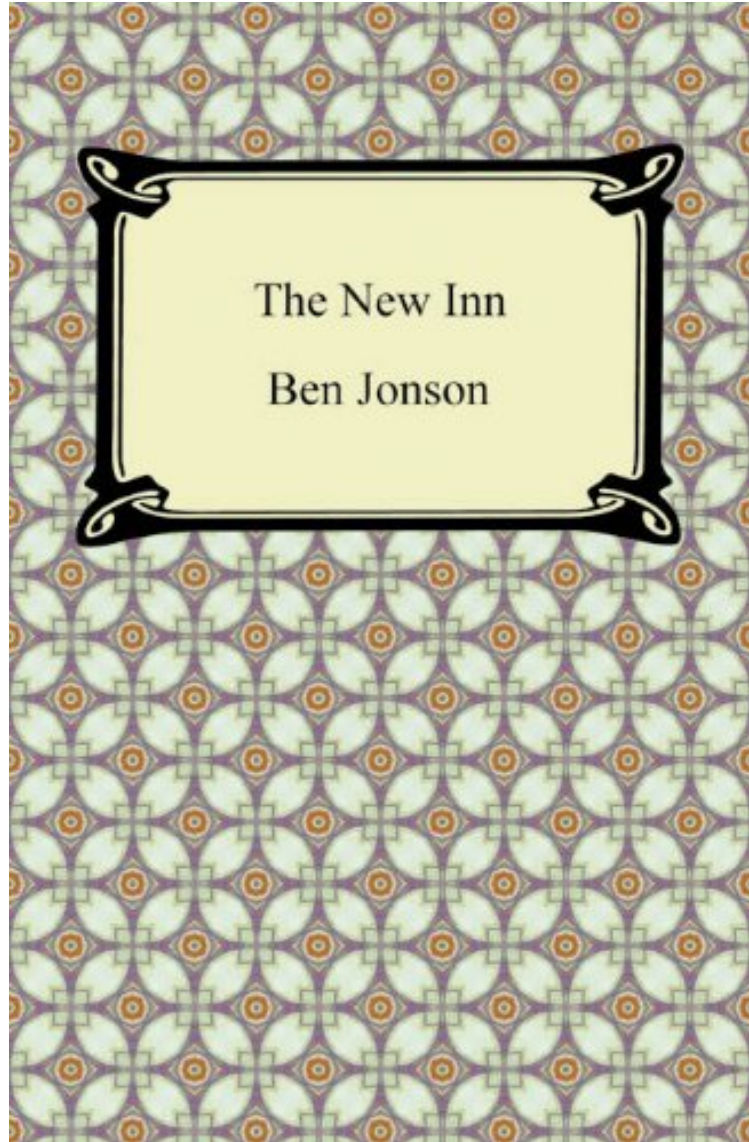


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The New Inn, or, The Light Heart

Ben Jonson

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Ben Jonson : The New Inn, or, The Light Heart before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The New Inn, or, The Light Heart:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The best of Jonson's later periodBy Sean JohnsonOne of Jonson's final plays. Jonson has clearly softened on many of his lifelong criticisms of Shakespeare; the influence of two plays he repeatedly criticized by name--The Tempest and The Winter's Tale--is unmistakable in The New Inn, though he maintains his strict adherence to classical forms (i.e. not violating the dramatic unities). While ultimately heartwarming, Jonson's embrace of Shakespearian forms is imperfect. A master at the comedic ensemble, Jonson here

tries his hand at the very Shakespearian high/low double plot (a la *The Tempest* or *Henry V*) and his untried hand wavers. Still, the speeches in the Court of Love scenes are some of Jonson's most beautiful, and the high plot succeeds with satisfaction. At any rate, the play is perfectly representative of Jonson in his later years, and a must-read for fans of Elizabethan drama. This review cross-posted at visionsetrevisions.wordpress.com

Benjamin Jonson's career began in 1597 when he held a fixed engagement in "The Admiral's Men", and although he was unsuccessful as an actor, his literary talent was apparent and he began writing original plays for the troupe. Jonson had a literary 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. Although nearly all of his most famous works were produced between 1605 and 1620, he continued to write until his death in 1637. "The New Inn, or The Light Heart" was performed in 1629, only a year after Jonson suffered a stroke. The story takes place in an inn-house, where Lady Frances Frampul meets the melancholy Lord Lovel, and a complex series of far-fetched events ensues.