Volpone
By Ben Jonson

Unrealized Costume Design
by Lillie Moses

Design Concept

My design concept combined animalistic or classic characterizations of the characters’ personalities with a Victorian Venetian setting. In keeping with the dark undertones and somewhat Dickensian plot of the play, I chose to set it during a time strife with poverty, greedy merchants, constraining gender norms, and strict social morals unheeded by those who dared. In my costume designs, I kept close to the early Victorian period while also trying to convey the true nature of each character whether good or evil.

About the Play

Volpone by Ben Jonson focuses on an old miser who delights in tricking wealthy acquaintances by pretending to be an invalid and attaining more money in doing so. Along with Volpone (meaning Fox in Italian), many of the other characters have names pertaining to specific animals such as Mosca (the fly), Voltore (the vulture), and Peregrine. These names point to unflattering personality traits and make it easier for the audience to understand Ben Johnson’s social commentary of European society in 1605.