

**ESTHER AND  
BERENICE;  
TWO PLAYS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649377473

Esther and Berenice; two plays by John Masefield

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Cover @ 2017

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**JOHN MASEFIELD**

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TWO PLAYS

BY  
JOHN MASEFIELD

ROSAS  
GALLIPOLI  
RIGHT ROYAL  
THE FAITHFUL  
SELECTED POEMS  
LOST ENDEAVOUR  
A MAINSAIL HAUL  
CAPTAIN MARGARET  
REYNARD THE FOX  
THE DAFFODIL FIELDS  
THE OLD FRONT LINE  
MULTITUDE AND SOLITUDE  
COLLECTED POEMS AND PLAYS  
SALT WATER POEMS AND BALLADS  
GOOD FRIDAY AND OTHER POEMS  
THE TRAGEDY OF POMPEY THE GREAT  
PHILIP THE KING, AND OTHER POEMS  
THE TRAGEDY OF MAN, AND OTHER POEMS  
LOLLINGDON DOWNS AND OTHER POEMS  
THE STORY OF A ROUND-HOUSE AND OTHER  
POEMS  
THE LOCKED CHEST: AND THE SWEEPS OF  
NINETY-EIGHT  
THE EVERLASTING MERCY AND THE WIDOW  
IN THE DYE STREET

# ESTHER AND BERENICE

TWO PLAYS

BY

JOHN MASEFIELD

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1922

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Set up and electrotyped. Published January, 1922.

Press of  
J. J. Little & Ives Company  
New York, U. S. A.

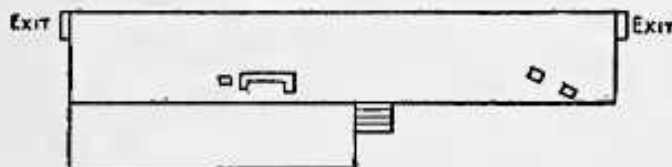


PR  
6025  
A137E  
1922

This adaptation of "Esther" was produced by Miss Penelope Wheeler at Wootton, Berks, on the evening of the 5th May, 1921, with the following cast:—

ESTHER.....	Miss Penelope Wheeler
RACHEL.....	Miss Geraldine Berkeley
MORDECAI.....	Mr. Richard Elwes
HAMAN.....	Mr. Kenneth Rae
HYDASPES.....	Mr. W. H. Nurse
AHASUERUS.....	Mr. Eric Dance
ASAPH.....	Mr. James Pearce
ZERESH.....	Mrs. Vidler
CHORUS.....	{ Miss Katharine Richards { Miss Judith Masfield
GUARD.....	Mr. P. Venables

The Play was performed without scenery upon a stage hung with curtains. There were exits and entrances R. and L. at Back, and an extra exit and approach by steps to the stage from Front Centre.



Avant-scène.

## PREFACE

I have been asked to write a few words to explain why these adaptations of Racine were made.

They were made for the use of a little company of amateur players who wished to try their art in verse plays, yet found that of the many fine poetical plays in the English language, not many suited their needs. The Elizabethan poetical play needs a large cast and a fairly large stage. The Restoration poetical play is of an old fashion. The modern poetical play is usually not enough of the stage nor of the people to hold the audience to which these players perform.

The stage upon which this company of players performs measures eleven feet by thirteen feet, so that no big production is

possible. The men players are often kept from performing by their work or study, so that no play with a large man cast can be undertaken. We had produced some half dozen plays of different kinds, and had learned that the poetical plays were by much the most popular. We wanted to do others. We wanted, in short, plays in verse that were of the theatre, that could be done with few properties and no scenery, with small casts of from six to nine persons. Knowing how keenly sensitive an English audience is to verse, we wanted plays with fine situations and stirring declamation. The French classical tragedies seemed to offer a foundation of what we needed, so these versions were made.

The play of *Esther* is an adaptation, not a translation, because in *Esther* our audience asked for something more than the French formality allowed. We could make nothing