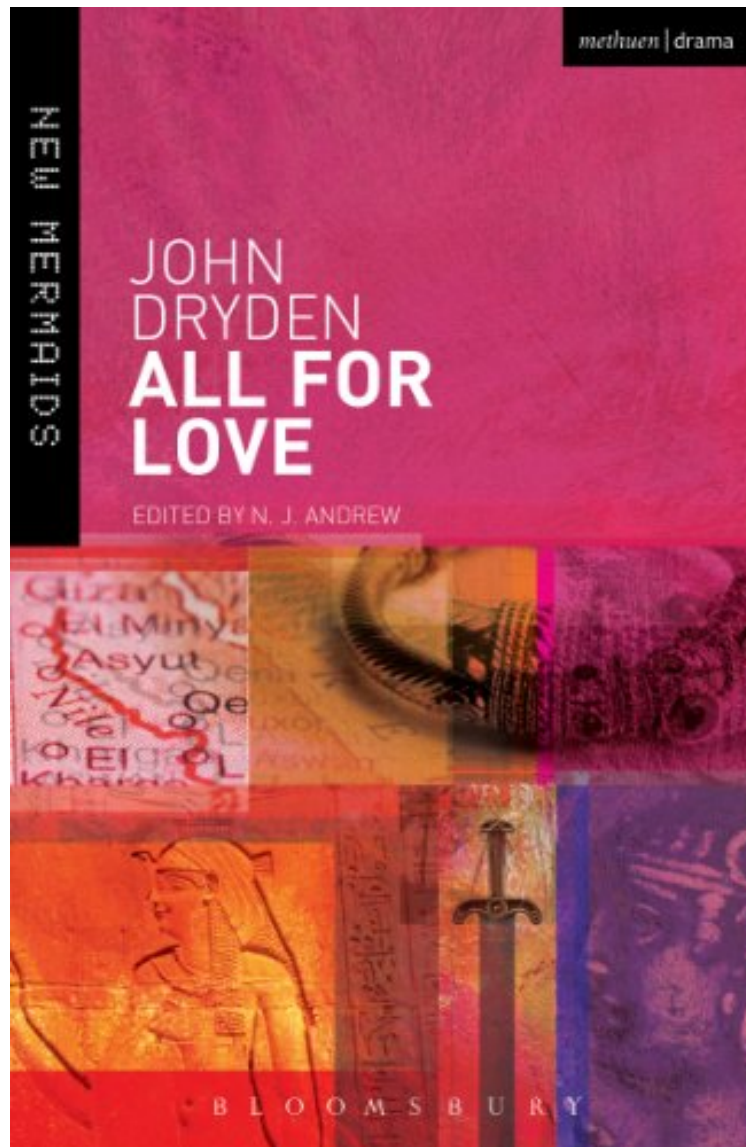


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All for Love (New Mermaids)

John Dryden

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All for Love or, The World Well Lost is John Dryden's 1677 adaptation of the tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra into a neo-classical quintet with supporting voices: After Cleopatra's desertion of Antony at the battle of Actium, not only his wife Octavia but also his general Ventidius and his friend Dolabella strive to win him over to their side. Antony, torn between the claims of duty, friendship, dignity and love, despairs when he hears the rumour of Cleopatra's death, which is not, as in Shakespeare's version, spread by the queen herself but by her deceitful eunuch. This edition includes Dryden's dedication of the play to the Earl of Danby and his preface, in which he defends against French neo-classicist strictures the liberties he took with his sources; it further discusses the play's austere power in the theatre, which is unjustly considered to be inferior to Shakespeare's quite distinct version of the story.

About the Author Vinton A. Dearing, editor of the California Dryden edition, is Professor of English at the University of California, Los Angeles.