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Oresteia (Oxford World's Classics)



Aeschylus
Oresteia

A new translation by Christopher Collard

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

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Synopsis

The Oresteia is the only trilogy of tragedy plays to survive from Ancient Greece. Agamemnon, Libation Bearers, and Eumenides have established the enduring themes of Greek tragedy--the inexorable nature of Fate, the relationship between justice, revenge, and religion. In this family history, Fate and the gods decree that each generation will repeat the crimes and endure the suffering of their forebears. When Agamemnon is murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra, their son Orestes must avenge his father's death. Only Orestes' appeal to the goddess Athena saves him from his mother's Furies, breaking the bloody chain; together gods and humans inaugurate a way of just conduct that will ensure stable families and a strong community. About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more. The Oresteia is majestic as theater and as literature, and this new translation seeks to preserve both these qualities. The introduction and notes emphasize the relationship between the scenes, ideas, and language that distinguishes this unique work.

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Customer Reviews

This is a compelling new edition of the Oresteia. It rivals all existing Oresteia's and perhaps comes

closest to Lattimore's version in accuracy and completeness of text. It is my favorite Oresteian Trilogy alongside Peter Meineck's version. Christopher Collard preserves the intricacy of Aeschylus's language while keeping the drama moving naturally. He does not force poetry or ideas into Aeschylus nor does he subtract, edit or delete words from the text (as often is done and can be seen in Fagels's and Vellacott's translations). The poetry comes out magically by itself. How Collard wins over Lattimore's version though is through the translation. The realism of the drama, the sentences structures, and the speeches all form naturally and normally. In Lattimore, the speeches and the drama becomes congested, constricted and (unnecessarily) complicated through how he structures the wording and poetry of Aeschylus's text. Collard does not use the tired and old fashion English like Lattimore, nor does he update the idiom by using modern American English or slang. You can't really pinpoint which language style he's using, but indeed it is beautiful, readable and contemporary English. It's like he has become a transparent mouthpiece for Aeschylus and not mask of his own creation. There are also some very intriguing and very interesting touches Collard does within the plays. Throughout are descriptive italic markings, brackets and hyphens, indicating detailed stage directions and emotive expressions. He freely uses lyric, prose, and verse in his translation as Aeschylus does in various settings and scenarios. His is the most scholarly version as it incorporates the most up-to-date findings and research into Aeschylus and the Oresteia. From original to copied manuscripts, he compared many ancient and modern editions of the Oresteia and so some of his version includes subtle changes and slight differences when compared to other translations. He informs you of missing lines and includes passages that appear as fragments in the originals, which have been glossed over or not noticed by other translators. His explanatory notes and introduction are immensely extensive. They include so much research and attention to detail that one wonders how one man could know so much about Aeschylus and the Oresteia! The Contents not only have 4 incredible essays on Aeschylus and the Oresteia, but also include summaries of the plots, text & translation notes, a massive bibliography, a chronology of Aeschylus' life, family trees, and even a map of ancient Greece. I believe it is safe to say that Christopher Collard is now the leading interpreter of Aeschylus, and a milestone in the history of Aeschylean translation and scholarship.

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thanks

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