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# The Comedies (Classics)



PENGUIN CLASSICS

TERENCE  
*The Comedies*



## Synopsis

The Roman dramatist Terence (c. 186-159 BC) adapted many of his comedies from Greek sources, rendering them suitable for audiences of his own time by introducing subtler characterization and more complex plots. In his romantic play, *The Girl from Andros*, Terence portrays a love affair saved by a startling discovery. *The Self-Tormentor* focusses on a man's remorse after sending his son to war, and *The Eunuch* depicts a case of mistaken identity. *Phormio* is as rich in intrigue as a French farce, while *The Mother-in-Law* shows two families striving to save a marriage and *The Brothers* contrasts strict and lenient upbringings. With their tight plots and spare dialogue, Terence gave his plays a sense of humanity that became a model in the Renaissance and greatly influenced Molière.

## Book Information

File Size: 991 KB

Print Length: 404 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 014044324X

Publisher: Penguin; Rev Ed edition (July 1, 2004)

Publication Date: July 1, 2004

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B002RI92PM

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #522,383 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #163

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Drama & Plays > Greek & Roman #176

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Drama & Plays > Classical & Early #287

in Books > Literature & Fiction > Dramas & Plays > Comedy

## Customer Reviews

Terence's character development is superb. He takes stock characters of past Greek plays and turns them around so that the reader sees that people are not black or white. They are rather gray with good and bad qualities. His stories develop around his characters and in each comedy there is

a message that is as timeless as the dialogue and interaction between characters in his plays. I didn't really know what to expect, but I was pleasantly surprised with the mastery with which Terence took Greek plays and adapted them for his Roman audience. The editing was good, and I think that there is a little something for all readers in the comedies of Terence. They are timeless classics that draw a quiet smile from the reader rather than an outright laugh.

Wow. I've read plenty of dramas, but this was my first ancient comedy. My girlfriend and I read this together, and neither one of us expected to enjoy it very much. But to our surprise, within 2 pages we were laughing constantly. We usually pause to talk frequently when we read something together, but this one we read very quickly because the plots and situations engrossed us so much. If you are looking to read and enjoy something truly classical, I suppose there's no better place to start than this. I imagine the translator was not too strict, but she did a good job in the spirit that I imagine Terence would want: not too literal, but very enjoyable.

This book is one of my favorite textbooks ever. The storylines are interesting, though perhaps not hilarious from a modern standpoint. They do however make excellent fodder for research papers and for a deeper understanding of the ancient world!

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