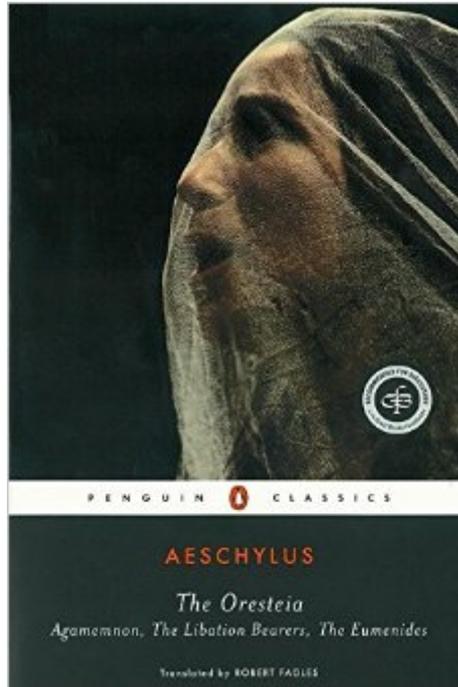


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# The Oresteia: Agamemnon; The Libation Bearers; The Eumenides



## Synopsis

In the Oresteia Aeschylus addressed the bloody chain of murder and revenge within the royal family of Argos. As they move from darkness to light, from rage to self-governance, from primitive ritual to civilized institution, their spirit of struggle and regeneration becomes an everlasting song of celebration. In Agamemnon, a king's decision to sacrifice his daughter and turn the tide of war inflicts lasting damage on his family, culminating in a terrible act of retribution; The Libation Bearers deals with the aftermath of Clytemnestra's regicide, as her son Orestes sets out to avenge his father's death; and in The Eumenides, Orestes is tormented by supernatural powers that can never be appeased. Forming an elegant and subtle discourse on the emergence of Athenian democracy out of a period of chaos and destruction, The Oresteia is a compelling tragedy of the tensions between our obligations to our families and the laws that bind us together as a society. The only trilogy in Greek drama that survives from antiquity, Aeschylus' *The Oresteia* is translated by Robert Fagles with an introduction, notes and glossary written in collaboration with W.B. Stanford in Penguin Classics. 'Conveys more vividly and powerfully than any of the ten competitors I have consulted the eternal power of this masterpiece ... a triumph' Bernard Levin 'How satisfying to read at last a modern translation which is rooted in Greek feeling and Greek thought ... both the stature and the profound instinctive genius of Aeschylus are recognised' Mary Renault, author of *The King Must Die* For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

What is the definition of a pedant? Someone who claims that Vellacott's translation of the Oresteia is "better" than Fagles' and complains about Fagles' supposed imprecision. That is seriously missing the forest for the knots in the lower branches of some of the smaller trees. Translation is necessary; nobody can know all the classical languages of the world, and few people who want to familiarize themselves with the great works of literature outside their own language have the time to master even a few of the languages required. And sound translation is a blessing. But it is very rare that one gets a translation that is itself a masterpiece of literature, that embeds itself into the language as a classic. I think we can all think of a few: Schelling's German versions of Shakespeare, which have been acted and reprinted for more than two centuries, Monti's Italian Iliad, the English Authorized Version of the Bible, Pope's and Chapman's Iliad - both beautiful, both unfaithful - and Fitzgerald's Rubayyat. Now as far as I am concerned this translation is that of that rare quality: something that will be read with pleasure and admiration as English verse, two hundred years from now. Those who whine about its being imprecise ought to remember that Italy's premier Iliad translator, Monti, knew no Greek and worked from Latin and earlier Italian versions; yet, being a great poet, he produced an account that has established itself at the heights of the Italian literary heritage. I first read Fagles' Oresteia at 18, in a Penguin paperback dotted with admiring reviews from everyone from Mary Renault to Bernard Levin; and I was so blown away that for a couple of days I could do nothing but bend the ear of all my friends and repeat - "And I thought Shakespeare was something!"

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