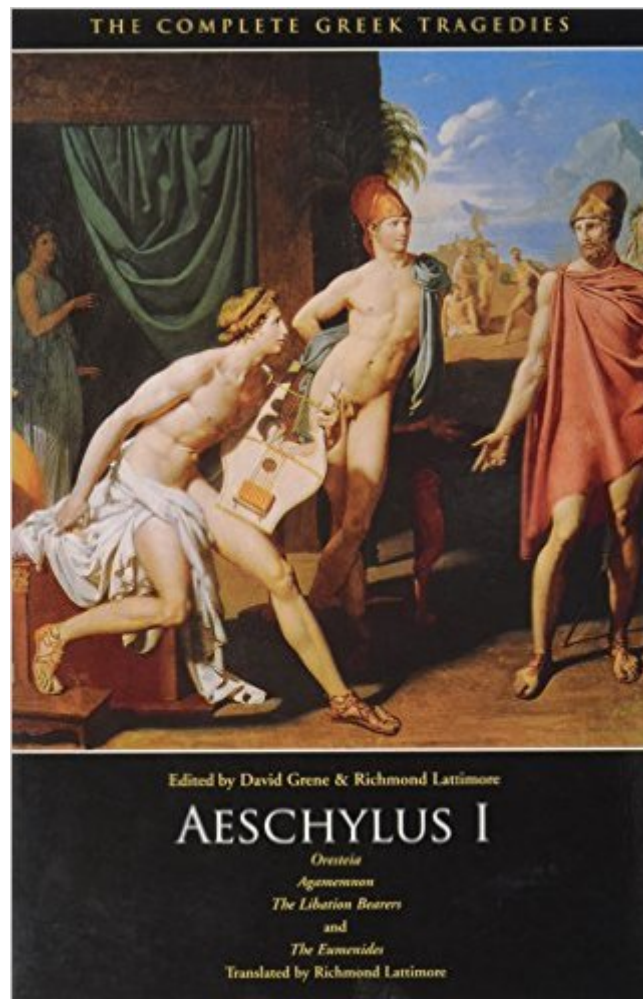


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Aeschylus I: Oresteia: Agamemnon, The Libation Bearers, The Eumenides (The Complete Greek Tragedies) (Vol 1)



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Customer Reviews

Aeschylus I (the Oresteia) probably best epitomized Greek tragedy. This compelling trilogy told the stories of endless cycles of violence in the House of Atreus that stretched across generations and only ended when peace and harmony took its place. In "Agamemnon", the king had just returned from Troy when he is murdered in his bath by his wife and lover. Aegisthus, the son of Thyestes, sought revenge for his father, whom his brother, Atreus, killed two of his sons and fed him to Thyestes. Aegisthus, the surviving son returned to Argos to marry the queen after Agamemnon left for

Troy. This would make Aegisthus the ruler of Argos. Clytemnestra agreed to this because she hated her husband for sacrificing their oldest daughter, Iphigenia, to appease Artemis. After Agamenon's death Orestes, only a child at the time, received a decree from the oracle to kill his mother to take revenge on behalf of his father. This is the theme of the "Libation Bearers." But when Orestes kills his mother it unleashes the Furies, primordial goddesses, who avenge Clytemnestra. In the third play, "The Eumenides" Orestes is put on trial by Athene and is acquitted of the murder of his mother but the Furies are not satisfied. Only a peace-making offer from the goddess to the Furies ended the endless avenging approaches to justice. The Oresteia centered on the concept of justice. How should a wrong be punished? What Aeschylus pointed out in his plays was that there were always two sides to every story. But it seemed man's fate to only see one side. Neither Orestes nor his sister, Electra, could see the anguish their mother experienced. They could not understand how she could slay their father because they saw no justification for such a brutal act.

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