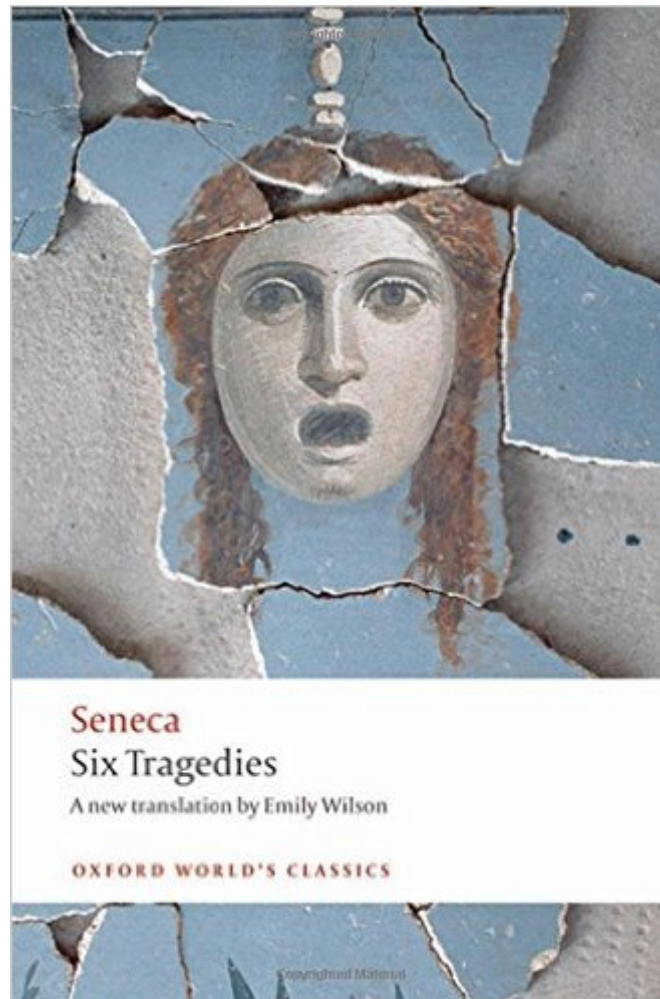


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Six Tragedies (Oxford World's Classics)



Synopsis

Here is a lively, readable, and accurate verse translation of the six best plays by one of the most influential of all classical Latin writers--the only tragic playwright from ancient Rome whose work survives. Tutor to the emperor Nero, Seneca lived through uncertain, oppressive, and violent times, and his dramas depict the extremes of human behavior. Rape, suicide, child-murder, incestuous love, madness, and mutilation afflict the characters, who are obsessed and destroyed by their feelings. Seneca forces us to think about the difference between compromise and hypocrisy, about what happens when emotions overwhelm judgment, and about how a person can be good, calm, or happy in a corrupt society and under constant threat of death. In addition to her superb translation, Emily Wilson provides an invaluable introduction which offers a succinct account of Seneca's life and times, his philosophical beliefs, the literary form of the plays, and their immense influence on European literature. The book also includes an up-to-date bibliography and explanatory notes which identify mythological allusions.

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.

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Customer Reviews

I had to read this book for my class which focuses on literature for Augustus to Nero. I have the

kindle version. The starring in the e-book is really nice in elaborating on references which mention gods, events, et cetera that as an average contemporary reader we don't know about, but any Roman citizen reading this would have known. Yet I still think there were a lot more points that the book could have pointed out because really unless you have a very extensive knowledge of both Greek and Roman mythology it's easy to miss many enriching references in the tragedies. That is my main scruple with the book. As someone who does know Latin, for the syntax, I think it followed really well what you would expect from reading this in the original language which I really enjoyed. Latin prides itself on this paradoxical and ambiguous syntax that this translation did well capturing. Now for the actual content of the book: I love Seneca, most of the time. The plays Medea, Phaedra, Oedipus, and Thyestes do not disappoint. They are scattered with those stoic principles Seneca is so famous for. They have the fast paced, passionate plots that you want in a tragedy. That being said Hercules Furens and Trojan Women, not so much. Both of these lack that spark of passion which makes all these other plays so interesting. They also seem to really not be focused on actual action but just retelling of former events. BE WARNED: These plays contain very graphic and violent depictions of murders of children, incest, and so forth just so you know. It is speculated that Seneca wrote these during the Neronian period so this graphic violence is directly correlated to a pessimism he suffered from living in such a period working under an emperor like Nero, but who knows

Ms Wilson gives valuable information on Seneca's life and times, which helps explain the content and tone of the tragedies. She also tracks how he influenced Elizabethan drama, from Kyd to Webster.

Very dark, but that's the nature of Seneca.

It is an accurate translation.

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